

THE DAWN IN RUSSIA

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

NEIGHBOURS OF OURS

IN THE VALLEY OF TOPHET

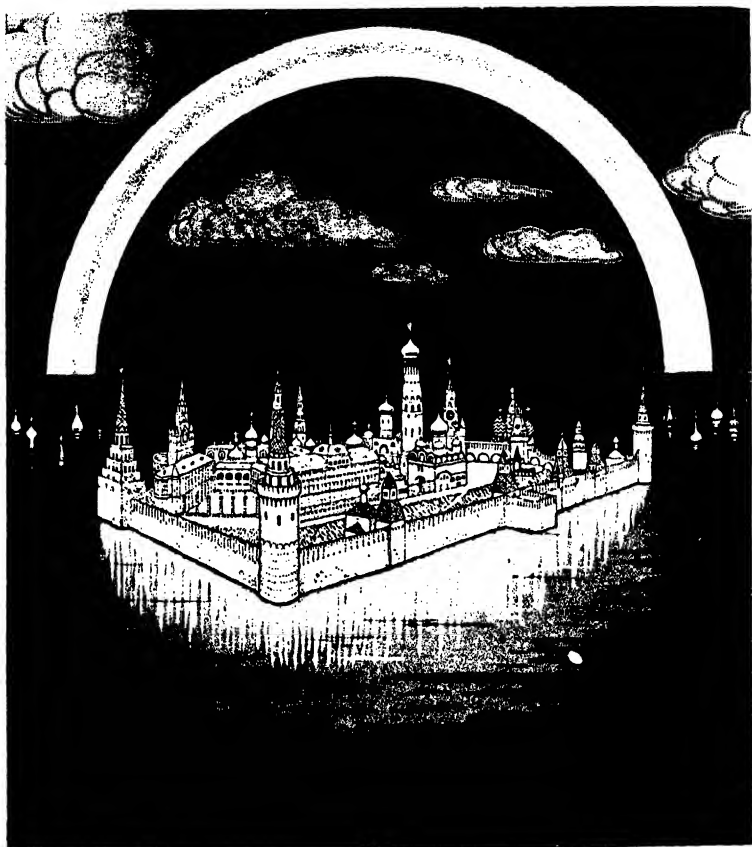
THE THIRTY DAYS' WAR BETWEEN GREECE
AND TURKEY

LADYSMITH : THE DIARY OF A SIEGE

THE PLEA OF PAN

BETWEEN THE ACTS

A MODERN SLAVERY



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"PACIFICATION."

THE KREMLIN OF MOSCOW, CHRISTMAS, 1905.

From *Sulphur* (Jupel).

THE DAWN IN RUSSIA

OR
SCENES IN THE RUSSIAN
REVOLUTION

HENRY W. NEVINSON



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The design on the cover is from a cartoon in the Russian revolutionary paper *Pulemet (The Machine Gun)*.

The illustrations are from Russian cartoons and from photographs, most of which were taken by the author.

THE DAWN IN RUSSIA

OR

SCENES IN THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

INTRODUCTION

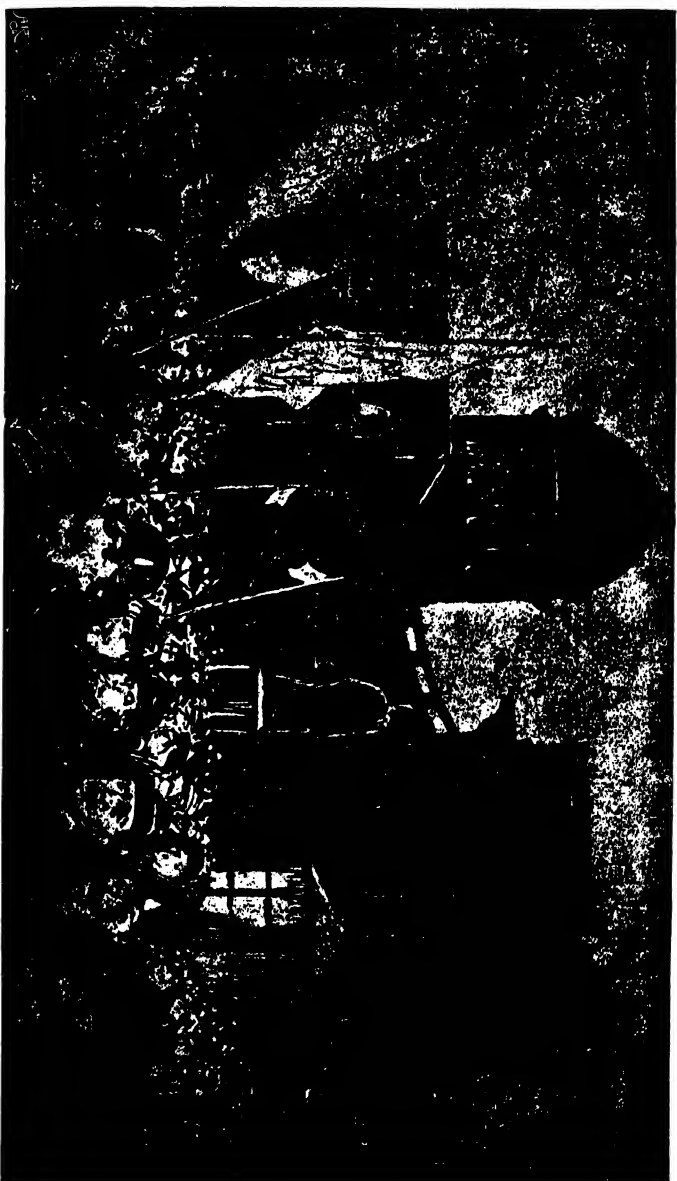
I HAVE not attempted in this book to do more than describe some of the scenes which I witnessed in Russia during the winter of 1905-1906, while I was acting there as special correspondent for the *Daily Chronicle*. For the most part, the descriptions are given in the same words which I wrote down at the time, either for my own memory or for the newspaper. But the whole has been re-arranged and rewritten, while certain scenes have been added for which a daily paper has no room. I have also inserted between the scenes a bare outline of the principal events that were happening elsewhere, so that the significance of what I saw may be more easily understood, and the dates become something better than mere numbers.

But to realize the meaning of the earlier chapters, a further introduction is necessary, and it is difficult

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to know where to begin. For there is never any real break in a nation's history from day to day, and the movement of 1905 was not the first sign of change, but only the brightest. The story of the undaunted struggle for freedom in Russia during the last fifty years has been admirably told by Stepniak, Kropotkin, Zilliacus, Miliukoff, and many other writers. In books that are easily obtained, any one may learn the course of that great movement—the changes in its aims and methods, the distinctions in its parties, and the martyrdoms of its recorded heroes. So for this present purpose of chronicling a few peculiar or unnoticed events and situations which would hardly have a place in history at all, perhaps it will be enough if I begin the skeleton annals with the outbreak of the war between Russia and Japan in February, 1904.

It is true that for some time earlier the revolutionary movement had obviously been gathering strength. Within two years there had occurred outbreaks among the peasants, student risings in Moscow, and a demonstration in front of the great classic building called the Kazan Cathedral in St. Petersburg. Some soldiers at Toula had actually refused to kill the workpeople. The Zemstvos, or District Councils of landowners and upper-middle classes, had ventured to recommend economic reforms, and a student from Kieff had assassinated Sipiaguine, the Minister of the Interior. To counteract



A DEMONSTRATION BY THE KAZAN CHURCH, ST. PETERSBURG.
From *The Marseillaise*.

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these evils, heightened by a period of industrial depression, Plehve had been promoted from the Governorship of Finland to the Ministry of the Interior ; a manifesto had been issued (March 12, 1903), removing the responsibility of the village communes for individual taxation, and promoting religious toleration ; and the Jews of Kishineff had been massacred, with the connivance of the Government, and probably at its direct instigation (April 20, 1903). The Armenian Church in the Caucasus was deprived of £3,000,000 of its funds, the public debt of Russia rose to £700,000,000, about half of the interest on which had to be paid to foreign countries, and Witte was appointed President of the Committee of Ministers, while his assistant Pleske succeeded him in what was then regarded as the far more important position of the Ministry of Finance.

It was obvious that the Government—which we may call Tsardom or Oligarchy as we please—had in any case entered upon the way to destruction, and that the revolution was already at work. Indeed, the Social Democrats had met in secret in 1903, and published a “minimum programme” demanding a Republic under universal adult suffrage. But still the disastrous war with Japan hastened these tendencies, and its outbreak may conveniently be taken to mark a period, for the dates of wars are definite and the results quick.

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The course of that ruinous campaign, unequalled, I suppose, in history for the uninterrupted succession of its disasters, need not concern us now. It wasted many millions of money, borrowed by a country which is naturally and inevitably poor. It revealed an incompetence in the ruling classes worse than our own in South Africa, together with a corruption and a heartlessness of greed compared to which even the scandals of South Africa seemed rather less devilish. It kept from their work in fields and factories about a million grown men, who had to be fed and clothed, however badly, by the rest of the population, and it killed or maimed some two or three hundred thousand of them. Otherwise the war can hardly be said to have concerned the Russian people any more than ourselves, so general was their indifference both to its cause and to its failure. "It is not our war, it is the Government's affair," was the common saying.¹ Tolstoy is a prophet, and the mark of a prophet is that he speaks with the voice of God and not with the voice of the people; but in his protest against the war (published in the *Times* of June 27, 1904) he uttered a denunciation of the Government with which nearly the whole of Russia's population would have agreed. Of the head of that Government himself, he wrote :—

"The Russian Tsar, the same man who exhorted all the nations in the cause of peace, publicly announces that,

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notwithstanding all his efforts to maintain the peace so dear to his heart (efforts which express themselves in the seizing of other people's lands and in the strengthening of armies for the defence of those stolen lands), he, owing to the attack of the Japanese, commands that the same should be done to the Japanese as they had begun doing to the Russians—namely, that they should be slaughtered; and in announcing this call to murder he mentions God, asking the Divine blessing on the most dreadful crime in the world. This unfortunate and entangled young man, recognized as the leader of 130,000,000 of people, continually deceived and compelled to contradict himself, confidently thanks and blesses the troops which he calls his own for murder in defence of lands which he calls his own with still less right."

While the myth of Russia's military and naval power—a myth which for fifty years had misguided England's foreign policy, checked any generous impulse on the part of our statesmen, and driven them to breach of national faith, callousness towards outrageous cruelty, and every moral humiliation that a proud and ancient people can suffer—while this overwhelming myth was being dissipated month by month in the Far East, the characteristic methods by which the Russian Tsar and Oligarchs sought to maintain their hold upon the wealth and privileges of State were being revealed in the so-called Königsberg case. It was discovered that even in a foreign capital like Berlin, the Russian Government employed a little army of spies, under a recognized and highly-paid official, to search the homes of Russian

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Liberals, to watch their goings, and open their letters. It was also shown that, even under a comparatively civilized government like the German, the authorities were ready to bring their own subjects to trial for alleged verbal attacks upon the Tsar ; while a Russian Consul, probably in obedience to orders from home, would tell any lie and garble any document to support the charge.

On June 17th the air was cleared by the assassination of General Bobrikoff, the Russian tyrant of Finland, and on July 8th that deed was followed by the assassination of Plehve. In all the history of political murder, I suppose, there has never been a case in which the victim received less pity, or the crime less condemnation. The pitiless hand of reaction was for the moment stayed. The birth of an heir to the uneasy crown inspired the Tsar with such amiability that, as father of his people, he abolished the punishment of flogging among his grown-up subjects. Prince Sviatopolk Mirski, who was justly regarded as something of a Liberal as princes go, succeeded Plehve at the Interior, released some political prisoners, advocated decentralization with the development of the Zemstvos, and promised better education, liberty of conscience, and freedom of speech.

Again the Zemstvoists, taking their courage as moderate Liberals in both hands, met secretly in St. Petersburg, and drew up a kind of Petition of Rights

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to be presented to the Tsar. There were one hundred and six members present at the secret conferences, thirty-six of them belonging to the caste of the nobility, and their Petition began with the complaint that the bureaucracy had alienated the people from the Throne, and that by its distrust of self-government it had shown itself entirely out of touch with the people. In place of the bureaucratic system, the Petition demanded an elected Legislature of two Houses, together with freedom of conscience, the press, meeting, and association, equal civil and political rights for all classes and races, and similar methods of justice for the peasants as for other men.

The Zemstvo petition was issued on November 22, 1904. A month later (December 26th) it was repeated in still more direct and urgent terms by the Moscow Zemstvo, which had always taken the lead in reform, being inspired by its President, Prince Sergius Troubetzkoy, Professor of Philosophy in the University since 1888. But, in the meantime, student riots had again occurred in Moscow and St. Petersburg, the censorship had been renewed, and on the same day as the Moscow petition there appeared an Imperial manifesto proclaiming "the unshakable foundations of the Russian State system, consecrated by the fundamental laws of the Empire," and announcing the Tsar's determination to act always in accordance

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with the revered will of his crowned predecessor, while he thought unceasingly upon the welfare of the realm entrusted to him by God. The manifesto went on to admit that when the need of this or that change had been proved to be mature, the Tsar was willing to take it into consideration, and upon this principle he undertook to maintain the laws, to give local institutions as wide a scope as possible, to unify judicial procedure throughout the Empire, to establish State insurance of workmen, and to revise the laws upon political crime, religious offences, and the press. But the tone of the whole manifesto was felt to be reactionary, and there was no guarantee that its promises would be observed. When our own Charles I. made concessions, the people shouted, "We have the word of a King!" But they soon found that assurance was a shifty thing to trust to, and since then the words of kings have counted for no more than the words of men.

But the opening of the next year (1905) was marked by the appearance of a new element in revolution. Certainly, there had been strikes and riots in the great cities before; there had been peasant risings and other forms of economic agitation in various parts. But as a whole the revolutionary movement as such had been inspired, directed, and even carried out by the educated classes—the students, the journalists, the doctors, barristers, and other

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professional men. It had been almost limited to that great division of society which in Russia is called "The Intelligence." The word is fairly well represented by our phrase "educated classes"—a phrase which embodies our greatest national shame. It includes all who are not workmen or peasants, and so is much wider in significance than the French term "The Intellectuals," with which it is often confused. In England, for instance, it would include the House of Lords, the clergy, army officers, country gentlemen, and the leaders of society whom no Frenchman would dream of classing among the intellectual.

It was "the Intelligence" who hitherto had fought for the revolution. It was they who had suffered scourgings and exile and imprisonment and madness and violation and the gallows in the name of freedom. It was they who had endured the horror that most people feel in killing a man. And, above all, it was they who had devoted their lives, their careers, and reputations to going about among the peasants and working-people to show them that the misery and terror under which they lived were neither necessary nor universal. At length the firstfruits of their toilsome propaganda, continued through forty years, were seen, and the revolutionary workman appeared.

He was ushered in by Father George Gapon, at that time a rather simple-hearted priest, with a rather

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childlike faith in God and the Tsar, and a certain genius for organization. His personal hold upon the working classes was probably due to their astonishment that a priest should take any interest in their affairs, outside their fees. We have seen the same thing happen in England, when Manning and Westcott won the reverence due to saints because they displayed some feeling for the flock which they were paid large sums to protect. Father Gapon, with his thin line of genius for organization, had gathered the workmen's groups or trade unions of St. Petersburg into a fairly compact body, called "The Russian Workmen's Union," of which he was President as well as founder. In the third week in January the men at the Putiloff iron works struck because two of their number had been dismissed for belonging to their union. At once the Neva iron and ship-building works, the Petroffsky cotton works, the Alexander engine works, the Thornton cloth works, and other great factories on the banks of the river or upon the industrial islands joined in the strike, and in two days some 100,000 work-people were "out."

With his rather childlike faith in God and the Tsar, Father Gapon organized a dutiful appeal of the Russian workmen to the tender-hearted autocrat whose benevolence was only thwarted by evil counsellors and his ignorance of the truth. The petition ran as follows :—

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"We workmen come to you for truth and protection. We have reached the extreme limits of endurance. We have been exploited, and shall continue to be exploited under your bureaucracy.

"The bureaucracy has brought the country to the verge of ruin and by a shameful war is bringing it to its downfall. We have no voice in the heavy burdens imposed on us. We do not even know for whom or why this money is wrung from the impoverished people, and we do not know how it is expended. This is contrary to the Divine laws, and renders life impossible. It is better that we should all perish, we workmen and all Russia. Then good luck to the capitalists and exploiters of the poor, the corrupt officials and robbers of the Russian people !

"Throw down the wall that separates you from your people. Russia is too great and her needs are too various for officials to rule. National representation is essential, for the people alone know their own needs.

"Direct that elections for a constituent assembly be held by general secret ballot. That is our chief petition. Everything is contained in that.

"If you do not reply to our prayer, we will die in this square before your palace. We have nowhere else to go. Only two paths are open to us—to liberty and happiness or to the grave. Should our lives serve as the offering of suffering Russia, we shall not regret the sacrifice, but endure it willingly."

On the morning of Sunday, January 22, 1905, about 15,000 working men and women formed into a procession to carry this petition to the Tsar in his Winter Palace upon the great square of government buildings. They were all in their Sunday clothes ;

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many peasants had come up from the country in their best embroideries ; they took their children with them. In front marched Father Gapon and two other priests wearing vestments. With them went the ikons, or holy pictures of shining brass and silver, and a portrait of the Tsar. As the procession moved along, they sang, "God save our people. God give our Orthodox Tsar the victory."

So the Russian workmen made their last appeal to the autocrat whom they called their father. They would lay their griefs before him, they would see him face to face, they would hear his comforting words.

But the father of his people had disappeared into space.

As the procession entered the square, the soldiers fired volley after volley upon them from three sides. The estimate of the killed and wounded was about 1500. That Sunday—January 9th in Russian style—is known as Bloody Sunday or Vladimir's Day, after the Grand Duke Vladimir, who was supposed to have given the orders.

Next morning Father Gapon wrote to his Union : "There is no Tsar now. Innocent blood has flowed between him and the people."

Innocent blood has flowed before and tyrants still have reigned. They have been feared, they have won their way, and men have served them. Mankind will endure much in the name of government,



"HOMUNCULUS" AND THE S. D. (SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC) RATS.

From *Burelom (The Storm)*.

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but to be governed by a coward is almost beyond the endurance of man.

On January 24th a new office of Governor-General of St. Petersburg was created, and Trepoff received the first appointment.

Disturbances continued in Warsaw, Lodz, and Sosnowice, the industrial centres of Poland, and on January 31st 200 work-people were killed and 600 wounded in the streets of Warsaw.

On February 17th the Grand Duke Sergius, Governor-General of Moscow, uncle to the Tsar, conspicuous for his cruelty, and, even among the Russian aristocracy, renowned for the peculiarity of his vices, was assassinated as he drove into the Kremlin.

This event and other outbreaks that were continually occurring in the great centres of industry, inspired a remarkable manifesto and rescript that appeared on March 3rd and were characteristic of the hesitating fugitive in Tsarkoe Selo. The manifesto took the form of a pathetic address to the people whom he had misgoverned with such disaster :—

“Disturbances have broken out in our country” (it said) “to the joy of our enemies and our own deep sorrow. Blinded by pride, the evil-minded leaders of the revolutionary movement make insolent attacks upon the Holy Orthodox Church and the lawfully established pillars of the Russian State. . . .

“We humbly bear the trial sent us by Providence, and

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derive strength and consolation from our firm trust in the grace which God has always shown to the Russian power, and from the immemorial devotion which we know our loyal people entertain for the Throne. . . .

“Let all those rally round the Throne who, true to Russia’s past, honestly and conscientiously have a care for all the affairs of the State such as we have ourselves.”

In the rescript that followed on the same day a form of Legislative Assembly was promised in these words—

“I am resolved henceforth, with the help of God, to convene the worthiest men, possessing the confidence of the people and elected by them, to participate in the elaboration and consideration of legislative measures.”

Buliguine, who had now succeeded Mirski as Minister of the Interior, and was probably the author of the rescript, was appointed to organize the elections. But a counterblast of reaction swept over the distracted Tsar; Trepoff was made Assistant-Minister of the Interior and Chief of the Police, with full power to forbid all congresses, associations, or meetings, and Buliguine resigned, though he remained nominally in office till the end of October.

Outbreaks in the country became continually more serious. In June there was fierce rioting in Lodz, the great manufacturing town of Poland, and in the Baltic port of Libau. In the same month the great battleship *Potemkin* of the Black Sea fleet mutinied at Odessa, threw two big shells into the

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town, burnt the docks, and steamed away to the mouth of the Danube for refuge.

Mid-August brought another manifesto, which began with the usual precepts of maudlin falsehood—

“The Empire of Russia is formed and strengthened by the indestructible solidarity of the Tsar with the people and the people with the Tsar. The concord and union of the Tsar and the people are a great moral force, which has created Russia in the course of centuries by protecting her from all misfortunes and all attacks, and has constituted up to the present time a pledge of unity, independence, integrity, material well-being, and intellectual development.

“Autocratic Tsars, our ancestors, constantly had that object in view, and the time has come to follow out their good intentions and to summon elected representatives from the whole of Russia to take a constant and active part in the elaboration of laws, attaching for this purpose to the higher State institutions a special consultative body, entrusted with the preliminary elaboration and discussion of measures, and with the examination of the State Budget.

“It is for this reason that, while preserving the fundamental law regarding autocratic power, we have deemed it well to form a State Duma, and to approve regulations for the elections to this Duma.”

This consultative Duma was to lay its proposals before the Council of State, which might submit them to the Tsar if it approved. The Duma was to meet not later than January, 1906, and was to consist of 412 members, representing 50 governments and the military province of the Don,

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only 28 of the members representing towns. The members were to be paid £1 a day and fares, and were to sit for five years, unless the Tsar chose to dissolve them. Their meetings were to be secret, except that the President might admit the Press if he chose.

On September 7th a race-feud broke out between the Mohammedan Tartars and the Armenians at Baku, on the Caspian, and spread to Tiflis and all along the southern slopes of the Caucasus. The destruction of the great oil-works at Baku involved a loss of many millions of pounds, and further embarrassed the railways and manufacturing districts, which depended almost entirely on naphtha for their fuel.

On September 25th an assembly of 300 representatives of the Zemstvos of the empire was gathered in a private house at Moscow to consider their attitude towards the promised Duma, which was regarded as a concession to their previous representations during the year. They recognized that the Duma of the August manifesto would not be either a representative or legislative assembly, but, regarding it as a possible rallying-point for the general movement towards freedom, they agreed to obtain as many seats as possible, so as to form a united group of advanced opinion.

They further drew up a programme of their political aims, including the formation of a National

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Legislative Assembly ; a regular budget system ; the abolition of passports ; equal rights for all citizens, including peasants ; equal responsibility of all officials and private citizens before the law ; the liberation of the villager from the petty official (natchalnik) ; inviolability of person and home ; and freedom of conscience, speech, press, meeting, and association.

The programme is important, as indicating what to the average Liberal politician in England would appear the most obvious abuses of the Russian system, because nothing is here demanded which has not long ago been obtained for our own country by the efforts of our upper and middle classes in the past.

As soon as the assembly broke up, Prince Sergius Troubetzkoy, the true leader of these Liberal or Zemski delegates, the President of the Moscow Zemstvo, and for a month past the Rector of the University, went to St. Petersburg to urge the Government to allow public meetings, and while speaking on behalf of free speech at the Ministry of Public Education, he suddenly died. He was only forty-three, and it is tempting to speak of him as the first of the Girondists to fall. But all through what I have seen in Russia, I have avoided even a mental reference to the French Revolution as carefully as I could. For history is a great hindrance in judging the present or the future.

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The manifesto of October 19th, announcing the final conclusion of the peace with Japan, by which the Russian Government was compelled to abandon all for which it had striven during many years in the Far East, was hardly noticed in the gathering excitement of the days.

On October 21st, the workmen again appeared unexpectedly upon the scene, and delivered their first telling blow by declaring a general railway strike. The strength of the movement was that it disorganized trade, made the capitalist and commercial classes very uncomfortable, and, above all, that it prevented the Government from sending troops rapidly to any particular point of disturbance. The weakness was that, as in all strikes, the strikers were threatened with starvation while their employers suffered only discomfort; that the peasants, being unable to get their produce to market, began to regard the revolution with suspicion; and that the Government succeeded in running a military train between St. Petersburg and Moscow (only a ten hours' journey) nearly all the time.

The objects of the strikers were in the main political, as could be seen from the demands presented to Witte by a deputation on October 24th—

“The claims of the working classes must be settled by laws constituted by the will of the people and sanctioned by all Russia. The only solution is to announce political guarantees for freedom and the convocation of

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a Constituent Assembly, elected by direct, universal, and secret suffrage. Otherwise the country will be forced into rebellion.”

To this petition Witte's reply was peculiarly characteristic—

“A Constituent Assembly is for the present impossible. Universal suffrage would, in fact, only give pre-eminence to the richest classes, because they could influence all the voting by their money. Liberty of the press and of public meeting will be granted very shortly. I am myself strongly opposed to all persecution and bloodshed, and I am willing to support the greatest amount of liberty possible. . . . But there is not in the entire world a single cultivated man who is in favour of universal suffrage.”

Undeterred by any fear of exclusion from the circle of culture, the workmen continued their demands for universal suffrage and a Constituent Assembly, and on October 26th the Central Strike Committee—or Council of Labour Delegates, as it was properly called—sitting in St. Petersburg, declared a general strike throughout Russia. About a million workers came out.

This was the second workmen's blow, and it shook Tsardom from top to bottom.

Four days after the beginning of the strike, the famous Manifesto of October 30th (17th in Old Style) was issued, promising personal freedom and a constitution. The document began with the harmless necessary cant—

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“The troubles and agitations in our capitals and numerous other places fill our heart with great and painful sorrow. . . . The sorrow of the people is the sorrow of the sovereign. . . . We therefore direct our Government to carry out our inflexible will in the following manner :—

“I. To grant to our people the immutable foundations of civil liberty, based on real inviolability of person, and freedom of conscience, speech, union, and association.

“II. Without deferring the elections to the State Duma already ordered, to call to participation in the Duma (as far as is possible in view of the shortness of time before the Duma assembles) those classes of the population now completely deprived of electoral rights, leaving the ultimate development of the principle of electoral right in general to the newly established legislature.

“III. To establish it as an immutable rule that no law can ever come into force without the approval of the State Duma, and that it shall be possible for the elected of the people to exercise a real participation in supervising the legality of the acts of authorities appointed by us.”

This manifesto was greeted by an outburst of joy unequalled in the melancholy annals of Russia. Righteousness and peace kissed each other upon the streets ; and so did professors, students, and even working people. Red flags paraded the squares, generals saluted them, soldiers joined in the Marseillaise of labour. But the Central Strike Committee was not overcome by the general hallucination. They rightly refused to trust the Tsar without guarantees, and they continued to press their demands for a political amnesty and the

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convocation of a Constituent Assembly. They also demanded the restoration of its old liberties to Finland, and the dismissal of Trepoff. When anti-Jewish riots broke out at Kieff, Warsaw, and especially at Odessa, they steadily and justly maintained that the "Black Hundred" or "Hooligans" of the massacre and pillage were encouraged by the police and the priests, who wished to make out that the Russian people were opposed to political liberties.

The panic of the Government continued. They could not measure the strength of this new force among the work-people, or of this new instrument, the general strike. They were uncertain, also, about the army, which, together with the police and officials, formed their sole protection from ruin. Pobiedonostzeff, the aged Procurator of the Holy Synod, and the embodiment of an obstinate and narrow tyranny in Church and State, resigned. On November 4th, an amnesty was proclaimed for political offenders, though certain qualifications and categories were added.

On the same day a manifesto restored the old liberties of Finland, abolishing the decree of February 15, 1899, by which the autocratic principle, the dictatorship, and the employment of Russian gendarmes had been imposed upon the duchy contrary to its original constitution, and repealing also the military law of July 12, 1901, which compelled recruits to serve outside their own country.

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On November 9th Trepoff sent in his resignation, and Durnovo, since infamous for his brutality, took office. The same day a violent but ill-considered mutiny broke out among the sailors and gunners at Kronstadt.

From that moment the Government began to recover courage, and we may mark the gradual revival of reaction. Perhaps it was immediately due to the refusal of the Liberal Zemstvoists to take part in a ministry under Witte, unless the promises of the manifesto were guaranteed, and a Constituent Assembly convened. In any case the change was quite apparent in a manifesto of November 12th, declaring the present situation unsuitable for the introduction of reforms, which would only be possible when the country was pacified.

Next day a ukase proclaimed martial law in Poland, and excluded that country from the manifesto, on the pretence that the Poles were plotting against the integrity of the Russian Empire by establishing a separate nation of their own.

The Central Strike Committee answered this ukase on the morrow-(November 14th) by declaring another general strike in sympathy with Poland, and Witte, on his side, retaliated by posting an appeal to the work-people, conceived in his most unctuous and fatherly style. It ran—

“Brothers ! Workmen ! Go back to your work and cease from disorder. Have pity on your wives and children,

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and turn a deaf ear to mischievous counsels. The Tsar commands us to devote special attention to the labour question, and to that end has appointed a Ministry of Commerce and Industry, which will establish just relations between masters and men. Only give us time, and I will do all that is possible for you. Pay attention to the advice of a man who loves you and wishes you well."

This appeal was immediately followed (November 17th) by a manifesto to the peasants, reducing their payments for the use of land by one-half after January, 1906, and abolishing it altogether after January, 1907. These payments were still being made under the land settlement that followed the emancipation of the serfs in the early sixties, and their nominal value to the Government was seven million pounds a year. But the apparent generosity of the remission is diminished by the consideration that the peasants had already paid the economic value of the land many times over, and pressure could still be brought upon them to make up the heavy arrears due to successive famines.

Three days later (November 20th), the Central Strike Committee declared the strike at an end. This second general strike was felt to have been a failure. People and funds were still exhausted by the first. Comparatively few of the great factories came out; the object of the strike was too remote from the workman's daily life to persuade him to endure the starvation of his family for it. So the

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strike failed. It produced nothing ; it did not frighten or paralyse the Government.

Nevertheless, the Strike Committee remained the most powerful body of men in the Empire, and their order commanding the cessation of the strike called hopefully upon the working classes to continue the revolutionary propaganda in the army, and to organize themselves into military forces "for the final encounter between all Russia and the bloody monarchy now dragging out its last few days."

Such was the situation when, on November 21st I landed at the revolutionary little port of Reval, and went on to St. Petersburg by the first train which had run since the strike ended.

CHAPTER I

THE STRIKE COMMITTEE

AWAY in the western quarter of St. Petersburg, at some distance from the fashionable centre, stands a rather decrepit hall of debased classic. In England one would have put it down to George II.'s time, but in St. Petersburg everything looks fifty years older than it is, because fashions used to travel slowly there from France. Among the faded gilding of stucco pilasters and allegorical emblems of the virtues and the arts, are hung the obscure portraits of long-forgotten men—philosophers, governors, and generals—who were of importance enough in their day to be painted for the remembrance of posterity. Glaringly fresh among the others hangs the portrait of the hesitating gentleman whom the accident of birth has left Autocrat of Russia, whether he likes it or not. The hall was dedicated to the discussion of "Free Economics" by some scientific body, but never before had economics been discussed there with such freedom as during those November nights when the Central Strike Committee, or Council of Labour Delegates, chose it for their meetings.

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Admission was by ticket only, and I obtained mine from a revolutionary compositor, hairy as John the Baptist, and as expectant of a glory to be revealed. On the first night that I went, the big chamber, with its ante-room half separated by plaster columns, was crowded with working people. So was the entrance hall, where goloshes are left, in Russian fashion, so that the floors may not be dirtied. Some of the men wore the ordinary dingy clothes of English or European factory-hands, making all as like as earwigs. Some had come dressed in the national pink shirt, with embroidered flowers or patterns down the front and round the collar. But most wore the common Russian blouse of dark brown canvas, buttoned up close to the neck, and gathered round the waist by a leather belt.

Many women were there, too, but as a rule they were not working women from the mills. Some may have been artisans or the wives of artisans, but most were evidently journalists, doctors, or students, from the intellectual middle classes, which in Russia produces the woman revolutionist—the woman who has played so fine a part in the long struggle of the past, and was now elated above human happiness by the hope of victory. For Russian women enjoy a working equality and comradeship with men, whether in martyrdom or in triumph, such as no other nation has yet realized.

The workmen were delegates from the various

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trades of the capital and some of the provinces—railway men, textile hands, iron workers, timber workers, and others. About five hundred of them had been chosen, and each delegate represented about five hundred other workers. But round the long green table in the middle of that decrepit hall, under the eyes of the hesitating little Tsar's portrait, sat the chosen few whom the delegates had appointed as their executive committee. Between twenty and thirty of them were there—men of a rather intellectual type among workers, a little raised above the average, either by education or natural power. A few wore some kind of collar, a few showed the finest type of Russian head—the strong, square forehead and chin, the thoughtful and melancholy eyes, the straight nose, not very broad, and the dense masses of long hair all standing on end. A few seemed to be bred just a trifle too fine for their work, as dog-fanciers say. There they sat and spoke and listened—the members of that Strike Committee which had won fame in a month—just a handful of unarmed and unlearned men, who had shaken the strongest and most pitiless despotism in the world.

In the middle, along one side of the table, was their president, the compositor Khroustoloff—or Nosar, as his real name was—a man of about thirty-five, pale, grey-eyed, with long fair hair, not a strong-looking man, but worn with excitement and

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sleeplessness. For there was no time now for human needs, and his edge of collar was crumpled and twisted like an old rag. Yet he controlled an excited and inexperienced meeting with temper and ease, showing sometimes a sudden flicker of laughter for which there is very little room in Russian life. Neither for sleep, nor human needs, nor laughter, was there time, but in front of Khroustoloff and of all those men lay the prison or the grave, and in them there is always time enough.

That night, as long as I was there, the meeting was occupied with the discussion of the eight-hours' day. One of the executive read out the reports received from all the factories represented by delegates as to the hours of labour at present. In some cases, the masters had conceded an eight-hours' day after the first strike. In others, they had come down to nine, in others to ten. Most had absolutely refused a reduction. These reports, though monotonous and many, were listened to with the silence that characterizes a Russian meeting. It was broken only now and then by a little laughter or a murmur of anger. I have never heard a Russian speaker interrupted even by applause.

The evening before I had attended a meeting where a dull but deserving speaker, to whom no one wanted to listen, went on for an hour and twenty minutes in a silence like an African forest's, with only an occasional whisper of breezy dresses

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as the audience changed their position at the end of some uninteresting clause. Ages of dumb suffering have given these people the interminable patience of mountains, and a public meeting is so new to them that they find a fearful pleasure in speeches which our free-born electors would howl down in three minutes. Any meeting of British trade-unionists would have polished off the Strike Committee's business in an hour, but when I came away, though it was past two in the morning and the meeting had begun at six in the afternoon, the discussion was still proceeding with healthy vigour, and there were plenty of other subjects of equal importance still to be settled. The Committee, in fact, sat almost in permanence night and day.

As soon as the reports were all read, the executive gathered up their papers and adjourned into an upper room to consider their decision. During their absence, the other delegates broke up into groups according to trades, for the discussion of their own affairs. Standing on a chair, a man would shout, "Weavers, this way, please!" "Engineers, here!" or "Railway-men, this way!" and the various workers clustered round in swarms. A fine hum of business arose, and a buzz of conversation with outbursts of laughter too, for all spirits still were high with success and the confidence of victory. At last, as the executive remained over an hour in conference, a yellow-haired young workman

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with a voice like the Last Trumpet, raised the Russian "Marseillaise," and in a moment the room was sounding to the hymn of freedom. Russian words—rather vague and rhetorical words—have been set to the old French tune, and even the tune has been altered at the end of the chorus, to make room for the words, "Forward, forward, forward!" which come in suddenly, like the beating of a drum. It was sung in all the streets of all the cities, but I heard it first in the midst of German territory, upon the Kiel canal. For as I was coming over, the only passenger upon the Russian boat, we met an emigrant ship bound for the refuge of freedom, as England still was at that time, and at the sight of our Russian flag the emigrants all burst into the song, the men waving their hats and the women their babes in defiance.

After the "Marseillaise," the workmen turned to national songs, one of which was almost as magnificent, and was touched with the immense sorrow of Russia. All had one burden—the hatred of tyrants, the love of freedom, the willingness to die for her sake. To us, such phrases have come to bear an unreal and antiquated sound, for it is many centuries since England enjoyed a real tyranny, and the long comfort of freedom has made us slack and indifferent to evil. But in Russia both tyranny and revolt are genuine and alive, and at any moment a man or woman may be called upon to prove how far the

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love of freedom will really take them on the road to death.

A few days before this workmen's meeting, I had been at an assembly of the educated classes to protest against capital punishment. One speaker—a professor of famous learning—was worn and twisted by long years of Siberian exile. He was the worst speaker present, but it was he who received the deep thunder of applause. Another had, with Russian melancholy, devoted his life to compiling an immense history of assassination by the State. Before he began to speak, he announced that he was going to read the list of those who had been executed for their love of freedom since the time of Nicholas I. Instantly the whole great audience rose in silence and remained standing in silence while a man might count a hundred. It was as when a regiment drinks in silence to fallen comrades. But few regiments have fought for a cause so noble, and few for a cause in which the survivors still ran so great a risk.

The executive returned from their consultation, and at once the meeting was quiet. President Khroustoloff, in a clear and reasonable statement, announced that, in the opinion of the executive, a fresh general strike on the eight-hours' question would at present be a mistake. The eight-hours' day was an ideal to be kept before them; they must allow no master who had once granted it to

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go back on his word ; they must urge the others forward, little by little, and in the meanwhile organize and combine till they could confront both capitalism and autocracy with assurance. Another member of the executive spoke in support of this decision, and then the delegates of the opposite party had their turn. It was the old difference between the responsible opportunist, who takes what he can get, and the man of the ideal, who will take nothing if he cannot have all. The idealists pointed to the evident intention of Witte's Government to thwart the workmen's advance. They pointed, with good reason, to the gradual renewal of police persecution during the last few days, and to the encouragement given to masters who declared a lock-out. They urged that it was best to fight before the common enemy regained his full power, and that the general strike, so efficient before, was still the only weapon the workmen had. It was all true. Yet the recent strike had almost failed, and it was just because a general strike was the workmen's only weapon that it should be sparingly used. A second failure within a fortnight would show the Government that freedom's only weapon was not so dangerous after all. In the end the executive had its way ; they were supported by three hundred votes against twenty ; and there could be no question of the wisdom. The weapon of a general strike is too powerful

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to be brought out, except for some special and all-important crisis. It is like an ancient king, more feared when little seen.

Freedom at that moment was just hanging in the balance. One almost heard the grating of the scales as very slowly the balance began to swing back again. Already things were not quite so hopeful as they had been, and many good revolutionists spoke of the future with foreboding. The first fine rapture of liberty was over, and people who had eagerly proclaimed themselves Liberals three weeks before, now began to feel in their pockets, to hesitate and look round. In subdued whispers commerce sighed for Trepoff back again, and the ancient security of a merchant's goods. They pretended terror of peasant outbreaks, and the violence of "Black Hundred" mobs, organized by the police just to show the dangers of reform. But it was reform itself that they dreaded, and the name of Socialism was more terrible to them than the tyranny.

Day by day the police were becoming active again. As family men with a stake in the country, they could not be expected to see their occupation taken from them without a struggle. They had the same interest in the ancient *régime* as the Russian aristocracy in Paris or Cannes; and for their livelihood the misery of the people was equally essential. Whenever they dared, they planted themselves in

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front of the doors and drove the audience away from a meeting; and the audience had to go, for except to bombs and revolvers there was no appeal. Every day I watched the police hounding groups of tattered and starving peasants or workmen along the streets, because they had ventured to come to St. Petersburg without passports, and had to be imprisoned till a luggage train could take them back to their starving homes. In spite of the manifesto, the censor of the post-office was active again. It is a terrible thing for a civil servant to feel that his work does not justify his pay. So the censor blacked out a cartoon in *Punch* representing the Tsar as hesitating between good and evil, and then he felt he could look the world in the face.

Already the people recognized that as yet they had no guarantee of freedom. As long as the Oligarchs controlled the police and the army, freedom existed only on sufferance. No one knew what the army would do, and no one knew what the fighting power of the revolution was. Those unknown factors alone terrified the Oligarchs into reform. But all the promises were only bits of paper. It had long been proved that the Tsar's word went for nothing. At the birth of his son he had abolished flogging, but the taxes had been "flogged out" of the peasants just as before. Manifesto after manifesto had been issued without the

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least result, beyond winning the applause of an English writer or two. So far the Tsar's pledges of reform had been no more effectual than his Conference of Peace and he could only become harmless if he had no power to harm.

Yet the outward appearance of freedom surpassed all hope and imagination. Nothing like this had ever been seen in Russia before. Newspapers dared to tell the truth. Meetings were held which a few weeks before would have sent every speaker to the cells. The Poles gathered in a great assembly demanding the overthrow of absolutism and solidarity for the revolution among all the states of the Empire. Women and children taunted the patrols of Guards and Cossacks as they rode the streets. Ladies threw open their nice clean rooms for workmen to meet in. The students' restaurants hummed with liberty. The air sounded with the "Marseillaise."

"In Russia now, everybody thinks," said a revolutionist to me, "and where people think, liberty must come." Thought and liberty were to bring him death in a few weeks, but for the moment it seemed impossible that any reaction could bring the old order back. All the king's horses and all the king's men could not restore that ancient tyranny. The spring of freedom had come slowly up that way, but at last it was greeted as certain, and so it seemed to me when in the darkness of

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early morning I left that workmen's meeting still hot with discussion in the mouldering hall, and tramped home through slush and thawing snow, watching the rough floes of drifting ice as they settled down into their winter places upon the Neva.

CHAPTER II

THE WORKMEN'S HOME

THE Schlüsselburg road runs nearly all the way beside the great stream of the Neva, which was still pouring down in flood in those November days, though it sounded incessantly with the whisper of floating ice. The road leads from St. Petersburg along the whole course of the river up to that ill-omened fortress in the Ladoga lake, where so many of the martyrs of freedom have enjoyed the imprisonment or death with which Russia rewards greatness. For six or seven miles the road passes through a series of villages, now united into one long and squalid street, inseparable from the city, though only a few hundred yards behind the mills and workmen's dwellings lie flat fields, and woods, and dull but open country. This is the largest manufacturing district of the capital. Its factories had already become historic with bloodshed, and it was here that the workmen's party was organized. and the Council of Labour Delegates first formed.

The mills stand on both sides of the river, but as a rule the workpeople live on the south or left

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bank, where the road runs ; for there is no passable road on the other side. In summer they pay a farthing toll to steam ferry-boats. In winter they walk across the ice to work, guided by little rows of Christmas trees stuck on the ice, as is the Russian way. But between whiles, twice a year, there come a few days when they cannot go to work at all. Those days ought to have come by the time I visited the region first, but the frost was late.

Everything was strange that year. For months together no work had been done, and though some of the mills had just re-opened after the second general strike, the road was crowded with shabby men and women, who gathered at the corners, or trampled up and down in the filth, or sat stewing in the dirty tea-rooms, quieting their hunger with drink. Fully 60,000 of them were out of work, for in answer to the strike many masters had declared a lock-out.

Backwards and forwards among them marched little sections of six or seven soldiers, their bayonets fixed, their rifles loaded, their warm brown overcoats paid for by the workpeople and the peasants. Groups of four or five Cossacks clattered to and fro with carbine and sword, while on the saddle, ready to the right hand, hung the terrible nagaika or Cossack whip, paid for by the workpeople and the peasants. It is heavy and solid, with twisted hide, like a short and thicker sjambok ; at the butt is a loop for the

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wrist, and near the end of the lash a jagged lump of lead is firmly tied into the strands. When a Cossack rises in his stirrups to strike, he can break a skull right open, and any ordinary blow will slit a face from brow to chin, and cripple a woman or child for life.

The Manifesto had not changed the Cossack nature. A week before, at a workmen's meeting held to discuss the strike, it was proposed to stop the steam trams which run along the road. But the Cossacks had received orders not to allow the trams to be stopped. So down they trotted to the meeting; a pistol shot is said to have been heard somewhere in the darkness, and in a moment the horses were plunging through the midst of a confused and helpless crowd, while swords and nagaikas hewed the people down. The number of killed and wounded was variously given, as is usual in massacres.

On one of my later visits down the road, I became acquainted with a man who had survived a scene even more terrible. As a small patrol of Cossacks was riding by, a little boy of eight, who had come to the mill with his mother, shook his tiny fist at them from a window. By command of their officer, the men rode into the mill yard, dismounted, entered the machinery rooms, bayoneted the child, and began firing at random upon the people at their work. Eight were killed where they stood. The man who told me of the deed escaped

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through a side door, and hid himself under the boilers till the soldiers rode away elated with victory. Then the workmen dragged out the dead, and the boy's body was given to his mother.

Tired of being slaughtered like fowls, the workmen themselves were collecting arms, and had organized a kind of volunteer service, or "militia," as they called it. Armed groups crept through the fields and back lanes from one point of vantage to another. Even in the daytime, firing was common in the streets, and almost every night the workmen met the soldiers in sharp encounter. The factories, whether at work or not, were all guarded by sentries inside and out. The Alexandrovsky ironworks, which belong to Government, and had been shut down the day before I was there, were at once filled with troops, and the hands, some five thousand in number, remained outside to increase the shabby and indignant crowd upon the street.

The ironworkers were the best paid of all the workmen in the district. The works are in an old red-brick factory, built originally for making guns, but long used for the locomotives on the straight line from St. Petersburg to Moscow. Many charming personages in Russian society had justly regarded that factory as the source of human happiness. But in their trepidation to enjoy, they had neglected the fount of enjoyment, and the place had long been sliding down to ruin. Already it was much cheaper



Art Reproduction Co.

AN AUTUMN IDYLL.

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to buy new locomotives from Germany, Belgium, or Zurich, in spite of the high tariff, than even to repair the old engines here. At last, I suppose, just the one inevitable day had come when the thing became too ludicrous even for a Government's methods of industry. The gates were shut, and the five thousand hands turned out to meditate on the source of human happiness.

It was thought at the time that, like the master of finesse who pays his tailor by ordering more clothes, the management would open again soon, because one per cent. of the wages had always been stopped for a pension fund. This fund was estimated at something like £2,000,000, and the Government might well prefer to go on paying out several thousands a year in dead loss rather than be called upon for a solid £2,000,000 when nothing more could be flogged out of the starving peasants, and France was beginning to look twice at a sou before lending it. What happened in the end I did not hear, but I passed down that road some months later, and the works were still shut up.

Other mills, which did not rest upon State credit (that is to say, on drink and the flogging of peasants), and were struggling not to keep shut, but to keep open, were naturally in a different position. There are cotton mills, wool mills, paper mills, and candle mills along the river, many of them run by English capital, and managed by English overseers. In most

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of the textile mills, the machinery is also English, this being almost the only import in which England still rivals Germany. There is a greater spaciousness about the buildings and yards than in England, due, I suppose, to the cheapness of land; though, in fact, our old economic theories of rent are valueless here, for, in spite of the vast extent of uncultivated land in Russia, the rents in the capital towns are far higher than in London. But, apart from this spaciousness and a certain easy-going slackness in the labour, one might imagine one's self in a Lancashire or Yorkshire mill. It was in mills like these that the labour questions arose which were really the causes of the strike that shook the Russian despotism. Of course, political questions came in—the war scandals, the demands for home rule, amnesty, universal suffrage, and a constituent assembly. But a revolution, like a war, goes upon its belly, and it is difficult to get working men to move if they are fairly content with their food and lodging. It is still more difficult to get working women to move.

Till ten years ago the hours in these mills were seventy-five a week, or twelve and a half a day, not counting the dinner hours. They then fell to sixty-seven, and the strike of last October brought them down to sixty-two and a half. For the first week of November (just after the manifesto), the hands proclaimed an eight-hours' day, and walked out of

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the mills when the time was up. After a week of that, the managers shut the gates, preferring to pay the hands the fortnight's wages to which they are entitled on dismissal, and then to let the mills stand idle. About a fortnight later, the textile managers agreed to come down to sixty and a half hours a week, and on that arrangement the hands came in again. Thus in ten years the workmen had reduced their hours by nearly fifteen a week, and seven of these had been knocked off in two months, simply by combination in strikes. As I said, the general strike is a powerful weapon, though, unhappily, dangerous to those who use it.

At the time there was a general opinion that a nine-hours' day would be enforced by an Imperial ukase. Even the employers believed it, and looked forward to making up the loss by increased duties on imports, and higher prices for their goods. The workmen would probably acquiesce, for a strike falls most heavily on themselves, and under the Russian factory laws any one who incites to a strike or joins in it may be imprisoned for four to eight months. Till December, 1904, all trade unions and meetings of workmen were also illegal. During his period of ill-omened power, Plehve had affected to encourage meetings in this very district, but his sole object was to ascertain who were the real leaders among the people, and who were the best speakers. When that was known, in the middle of the night, knocking

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would be heard at a man's door. He would open it to a group of soldiers or police, and from that moment he disappeared, spirited away, no one knew where. It was the Government's method of protecting vested interests.

Wages nearly always go by piecework, and they vary according to skill. In the cotton mills a man may earn anything between 15*d.* and 4*s.* 4*d.* a day, and a woman between 10*d.* and 2*s.* 4½*d.* In the woollen mills a weaver makes about 3*s.* 5*d.* a day, and he has two assistants (generally girls) who make from 1*s.* 10*d.* to 2*s.* 4*d.* each. The ironworkers, as I said, get a rather higher wage, but the maximum, I think, in no case is over 30*s.* a week, and I doubt if the average, including women and girls, is over 15*s.*

The mere amount of money in wages is unimportant. A handful of bay-salt or three yards of cheap cotton may be good wages to an African native. All depends on what the payment can buy and what work it represents, and I am inclined to think from what I have seen in many lands that in reality the wage of the working class is much the same all the world over. The standard of tolerable existence certainly varies a little, but the wage is always regulated by the lowest standard that will be endured. Wherever I have consulted an overseer or mill-owner as to the standard of living in Russia, he has almost always told me that I must

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not judge by English ideas, "because the people here are quite satisfied with black bread and cucumbers." By cucumbers he meant the small pickled gherkins in barrels, such as form one peculiar ingredient in the smell of Petticoat Lane. At the same time all English overseers were agreed that the Russian workman's standard of work is far lower than the English. A Russian will mind only two looms, they told me, where an Englishman will mind four or even six. It had not occurred to them that there might be some connection between the standard of food and the standard of work, nor, indeed, did that concern them much, for in the end they obtained about the same amount of work for the same amount of wage.

When I became more acquainted with the work-people's life and had been into several of their homes, I found that, as long as they were in work, most of them had soup every day, because bad meat was cheap. Beyond the soup, black bread was the duty, pickled cucumber the pleasure; and the drink was almost unlimited tea—very weak and without milk, but syrupy with sugar—varied by an occasional debauch on the State's vodka, which pays the greater part of the tyranny's expenses.

On the Schlüsselburg road the work-people live in wooden huts built up wandering courts or lanes off the main street. I have not seen a family occupying more than one room. If they rent two

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or three, they sub-let. A room costs from 15s. to 22s. a month, and the larger rooms are usually divided between two or more families. In some cases each of the four corners is occupied by a different family, separated by shawls or strings, and dwelling as though in tents, as used to be the fashion in the East End. Till quite lately a very large proportion of the work-people lived in special barracks built for them inside the mills, but during that year of strikes most of the overseers had cleared their work-people out because they were dangerously near to themselves and the machinery, and I did not see the "living-in" system really at work till I got to Moscow, where it was still general, though probably soon to disappear.

In the work-people's rooms there was hardly ever any furniture beyond the bed, the table, some stools, and a chest for clothes. I never saw washing things of any kind. Even in winter the family clothes are washed in the river, the women cutting square holes in the ice and dipping the clothes into the water below. As to the people, in accordance with the one salutary rubric of the Orthodox Church, all men (I am not quite sure about women) must wash before they go to service. In preparation for this sacred duty, they pay a few pence at the public baths, sluice themselves down with hot water, and then lie steaming on shelves, brushing their skin with branches of birch. The effect is very satisfactory, and

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the Russians as a whole are a cleanly people, both in themselves and their houses, compared to ourselves.

The work-people have the further advantage of twenty-three ecclesiastical holidays in the year, not counting Sundays, and the masters are obliged to provide a hospital or to pay for medical assistance, even for women with child. In an English mill across the river, a clubroom for lectures, concerts, and amusements had just been erected, but the revolution had arrested culture of that kind. It had also arrested football, which was just becoming popular. Cricket had been tried, but was found too mysterious and pedantic, too much like the British Constitution with all its growths and precedents. The only native amusements that I could find were cards, knucklebones, and the fortnightly debauch in vodka when the wages are paid. But at the time of my first visit, there was some chance that the vodka would be dropped, for on the previous Sunday night the Strike Committee had decided that the work-people should for the present give up spirits, tobacco, and other Government monopolies, not for abstinence but to deprive the Government of revenue. The truly Nationalist party has urged the same course in Ireland.

There is one peculiarity which complicates the Russian labour question. Some of the work-people have now lost all connection with the land, but a great majority are still bound by the closest links of

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duty and affection to their village, and to the little strips of earth which have been allotted to their family. Probably most of the hands in any mill have come there in hopes of paying the taxes on the land, and keeping the family alive in the starving village at home. Between the village and the factory they are continually passing to and fro. Sometimes as many as half the hands in a mill will set off to their villages during the year, and come back again. I have seen the books of one factory, employing nearly 2000 hands, from which over 1000 had gone and returned. If a working son on the land is called to the army, a mill hand walks away to take his place. If labour is short at harvest, they go. If the village community is re-dividing the land, they go. The father of the house at home can always send for them, and they go. It comes of that touching passion for the land which is the great motive of the Russian people. Mercilessly robbed as they have been, nothing has yet induced them to believe that land can belong to Tsar, or Prince, or idle proprietor. Land, they say, cannot belong to people who do not work it; of course it cannot. The land belongs to the peasants. If only the good Tsar knew what the people suffer because their land is kept from them, he would give it them back. As Stepniak said long ago, that simple faith is one of the tragedies of Russian life. *

* See especially his book on "The Russian Peasant,"

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DIARY OF EVENTS

On November 20th, a Peasant's Congress met at Moscow. There were 300 delegates including several women. Their main demands were for a Constituent Assembly and Nationalization of the land. Sixty followers of Tolstoy were present, and most of the delegates spoke for revolution by peaceful means. Yet on November 27th they were all arrested.

On November 26th, a serious mutiny broke out in the army and fleet at Sevastopol, under the leadership of Lieutenant Schmidt, who had already been expelled from the navy as a Socialist. For a few days the Government suffered panic, but the mutiny was put down without much difficulty.

On November 28th, the post and telegraph hands struck at Moscow for the right of union. The strike extended through the service and paralysed business and Government action. The average wage of the assistants was £5 a month.

CHAPTER III

FATHER GAPON AGAIN

THE morning of December 4th was damp and misty, but from an early hour crowds of working people were standing in the slushy snow outside the queer old arrangement of two or three huge sheds which is known as "Salt Town." It is across the Fontanka canal from the School of Engineers, not very far from the two churches that commemorate the murder of two Tsars. I suppose it has been used at some time or other as a depôt for a Government salt monopoly, and so received its name. In ordinary peaceful years, it now serves as a suitable place for military lectures and engineering experiments such as trained the Russian officers for their overwhelming defeats. But in the stir of revolution, popular meetings of every kind assembled there, because its gaunt white walls and iron roofs would hold such large crowds of work-people under cover, and it supplied accommodation for the coats and goloshes of the intellectual.

I had already attended an immense all-night meeting there to denounce the Government for

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encouraging the priests and hooligans in their slaughter of the Jews. That very morning of December 4th the school teachers were assembled in one of the halls to discuss whether they too should strike and claim the right of union. But the main interest of the day was centred in the other large hall, where the followers of Father Gapon—the men who had appealed in procession to the Tsar himself on the 22nd of January before—were now gathering together for the first time since that childlike appeal had been answered by massacre.

The meeting was called for ten o'clock in the morning, either to elude the police or to save the expense of light. A Russian meeting is, I think, very seldom less than an hour late, because the Russians are by nature a courteous people, and it is obviously impolite to begin before every one who wishes to come has had a chance of being in time. But long before eleven there was not standing room for another soul, and fifteen hundred men and women were waiting with that inexhaustible Russian patience. Their pallid faces, many of them grim with hunger, looked spectral under the dim twilight of a Russian morning, as I watched them turned upwards in silence to the platform.

Two whispered rumours were going round. One that the Social Democrats intended to break up the meeting; the other, that Father Gapon was

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not coming after all, and both rumours were almost unique among the rumours I have heard in wars and revolutions, for both were true.

At last the meeting was called upon to declare whom it would have for chairman, and one great shout went up for "Barashoff." I do not know who Barashoff was, or how he had gained the confidence of the work-people, but his election was at once taken to prove that the Social Democrats present were comparatively few. He came forward—a middle-aged, reddish-bearded man, with no apparent gift of voice or influence—and I do not know what has become of him since, or what prison received him. But there he stood beside me on the platform and announced to the meeting that first they would sing the Hymn of the Fallen, in honour to the victims of that Bloody Sunday when last they had met together.

The whole audience rose, and stood in absolute silence till some one gave out the first note. The hymn consists of only one line, three times repeated, and its only words are, "To their eternal memory." Yet all the church services I have heard were frivolous compared to it. For it celebrated the martyrdom of men and women whom the worshippers had known, and whose danger they had shared. I do not know what it is that gives so profound a solemnity to Russian popular music, or how it comes that a Russian crowd produces such a

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deep volume of musical sound. Perhaps there is an unconscious influence from the old Church music, always so solemn and grave, so free from sentiment and tune. More likely the nature of both arises from the monotonous unhappiness of Russian life, the melancholy of long oppression, and the nearness of death from day to day ; at all events, it must have a different origin from the comfortable and profane spirit that produces "A little bit off the top" or "The old bull and bush."

When the hymn had been sung, we were definitely told that Father Gapon would not be present, but had sent a letter, which was read. It called upon the work-people to take courage again, and to set about rebuilding the unions and clubs which had been destroyed by the massacre. While the letter was being read, great excitement arose among the audience because police spies had been discovered among the teachers' conference in the neighbouring hall. Spies, disguised as schoolmasters, disguised as women ! Teachers are not a militant race ; should not the hard-handed work-people flow over into the conference and protect the innocent instructors of the coming State ? It is spies that drive men crazed with hatred, and even the reptile governments that use them shoot them. That very morning the post and telegraph clerks had proclaimed that they would never end their strike until the enormous system of spying into letters, newspapers, and telegrams had

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been abolished. Of all the methods by which a cowardly government can harass the people who feed it, none is more despicable than the entanglement of espionage with which it surrounds itself. But as to abolition, what would then become of all those swarms of censors, blackers-out, interpreters, letter-openers, secret police, cabdrivers, porters, and provocative agents who seek their meat from Government? Will not all these men struggle for existence like others, being human creatures, though no one would suppose so? Or who will pay the rent of all those houses, like that house beside the Moika Canal where muffled figures hang carelessly about the doors, and sledges stop for no apparent reason, and the men and women who come out have acquired the look of vultures?

But for the moment the Government which feeds the vultures was afraid for its own skin. The police and spies slunk out of the conference without compulsion, and in the workmen's meeting the five-minutes' speeches began. They went with that extraordinary dash and fire which appear to be the common heritage of nearly all Russian speakers. How they have managed to inherit such a power is one of the mysteries of this mysterious revolution. In a land where public speaking has usually been punished by exile or death, we find a whole race of orators. Carlyle used to speak of a "great dumb Russia" with admiration, and foretell a strange

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time when Russia found her voice. That autumn she had found her voice, and certainly the time was strange. One workman after another got up and said his brief say, without pause or hesitation, inspired by that passion of conviction which only unendurable wrong can give. A woman also spoke, with similar brevity and power.

The demands made in those little speeches of condensed flame and rushing words were for rights which English workmen have long ago won for themselves. The object of the meeting was to re-establish the eleven unions of workmen which Father Gapon had instituted before the massacre of last January. Such unions were hardly to be distinguished from the trade unions of our country, and there was nothing in the least Utopian or savage about the Gapon programme. His followers refused even to call themselves a party. They had no newspaper as their organ. The *Word* (*Slovo*), which had once most befriended them, had lately gone over completely to the reaction. One of the most applauded speakers at that morning's meeting denounced the leaders who urged the workmen to organize themselves into armed bands, whereas knowledge, he said, must come before arms, and not battalions but unions must be organized. Only one other purpose remained before the meeting—to demand complete amnesty for Father Gapon and all political offenders, especially for those who had taken

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on themselves the hateful task of political assassination in the time of darkness before freedom appeared.

From time to time a Social Democrat raised his arm and burst into a violent and threatening speech against the meeting. Once there was a deliberate attempt to empty the hall by a free fight, and the timid began edging out at the doors, chiefly under the belief that the yelling democrat who was denouncing the Gaponists was secretly an agent of the police. It may have been so, but I think he was only a Social Democrat insisting upon the creed by which alone the Marxists would drive the world to salvation. This Catholic kind of Social Democrat is often distinguished by a certain intolerance and pedantry which give a power and consistency such as religious Catholicism has, but form a barrier against wider sympathies and human freedom. "No salvation but by us" is their motto, and when an erring meeting cries them down, they feel defrauded of their right to redeem mankind.

On the other hand, a speaker who brought greetings from the Belgian Anarchists was politely listened to, though in the towns Russia has no Anarchist party now. Tolstoy bears an honoured name such as Rousseau bore in France, and his portrait is welcome in shop-windows; but among revolutionists his Anarchism is too gentle, and his Christianity too dull. Outside his own circle of disciples among the peasants, the flame of his spirit

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may kindle many, but his actual followers are few. When every one is remodelling the State with impassioned zeal, it seems hardly opportune to raise the question whether it is not better to have no State at all.

The speeches were over by about one, and then the meeting split up into groups to reorganize the unions. By an arrangement among one or two friends, we left the Salt Town separately, and gradually reassembled in a room above a little restaurant, some distance away. There we found Father Gapon himself hiding from the police, with a bottle of beer before him, and a few supporters at his side, rather obviously his inferiors. At the time he was not afraid of political arrest. Probably Durnovo himself would hardly have dared to strike at him then. But the danger was that he might be handed over to the Church as a renegade priest and imprisoned till death in some monastery for the good of his soul.

Outwardly there was little of the priest left about him then, unless it was his evident want of the commonplace kinds of knowledge that most people have. It was said that his stay in England that summer had changed him so much that his own friends could not recognize him, and he had been present at the meeting unobserved. But there was not really much difference, except that he had cut his hair and beard like ordinary men, and put on modern clothes instead of the survival of classical

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raiment which most European priests prefer. The transparent eyes of lightish brown, generally looking down or cast a little sideways—these were the same. So were the nose and thin face, the thin and delicately arched eyebrows, the thin hands and slight figure, the blood just showing under the pale brown skin—a rare thing in a Russian ; and, indeed, both by name and race I believe he comes of a Dnieper Cossack or, some say, a Greek stock. If the Russian police cannot see these things, Scotland Yard could beat them. The outward look seemed to reveal at once a delicate and sensitive nature rather than strength of resolution or fire of purpose—one of those natures in which we easily detect the child still lying hid beneath the maturity of manhood. Something of a child's craft, perhaps, lay there too, and of a woman's methods, unwilling to be hated or despised even by the enemy. Equally childlike was that evident love of pleasure which made him rejoice in Paris and London as in glorious bazaars where the toys were all real things, and the dolls were living women, all made to squeak and shut their eyes.

Yet this was the man who struck the first blow at the heart of tyranny and made the old monster sprawl. At first, perhaps, his heart was simpler in its ignorance, and pleasure, being unknown, did not move him. But when theorists condemned him for opportunism, as they did daily, I remembered that

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he, at all events, knew the work-people in their daily life and not as an abstract proletariat, and that he, at all events, had accomplished something. It is much to be regretted, but it sometimes happens that the opportunist is the only man who does accomplish something.

The conversation naturally ran upon the meeting, and upon a danger to the movement that would very likely arise from the unbending attitude of the Social Democrats, who with impracticable pride hated a Social Revolutionary more than a Grand Duke, just as true Catholics enjoyed burning a Protestant more than a pagan. To Father Gapon the great danger before the country appeared to be the immense conflict between the Social Democrats, representing the town work-people, and the host of peasants, numbering over four-fifths of Russia's population. But as he spoke, warning voices were heard, a danger appeared before us all, and suddenly the picturesque little figure had vanished, and the rest of us were drinking beer over a sleepy game of cards, till with a yawn we rose, and one by one made our way down the busy street.

That afternoon Father Gapon escaped into Finland, and France swallowed him for a time.

CHAPTER IV

THE FREEDOM OF THE WORD

IN those happy weeks when freedom still was young and living, two things ruled the country—speech and the strike, the word and the blow. The strike was everywhere felt. No letter or telegram went or came. Each town in Russia was isolated, and the whole Empire stood severed from the world. Banks sent their money to Europe by special messengers, like kings. Telegrams were carried a twenty-four hours' journey to the frontier. Almost every night I was down at the Warsaw station watching the passengers, to see if any could be trusted to take a letter home. When I travelled further into Russia, I organized an elaborate private post by stages, engaging hotel-porters, students, lady-doctors, tram-conductors, and barmaids in my service. On one occasion the scheme worked with real success, and brought me a halfpenny paper which cost me three pounds. Later I found it best to give my own letters to Lancashire women, going home for safety—wives of the managers or engineers in cotton-mills—and they posted them under their skirts.

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At St. Petersburg, the well-to-do classes, who were losing most by the postal strike, made a heroic effort to assist the Government and themselves. Having first seen that strong patrols of horse and foot were stationed at all corners of the General Post Office, and at every door, they organized a volunteer service of sorters among their own number, and one saw elegant young men and white-haired gentlemen who had passed an honoured existence in avoiding work, now struggling to make out how it was done. Enthusiastic girls, in the prettiest of furs and the smallest possible goloshes, hastened by eleven o'clock to their stools in the stuffy office, and sat there till four, with the self-sacrificing zeal of young ladies at a church bazaar. One must do something for one's country when the lower classes are giving so much trouble. So with a smile and a flash of rings, they plunged into the honest toil of sorting the stacks of letters which had been arriving by half a million a day ; and some of the letters reached the right address.

Other strikes were of almost equal interest. In Moscow the cooks struck, and paraded the streets with songs never heard in the drawing-room. The waiters struck, and heavy proprietors lumbered about with their own plates and dishes. The nursemaids struck for Sundays out. The housemaids struck for rooms with windows, instead of cupboards under the stairs, or sections from the water-closets.

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Schoolboys struck for more democratic masters and pleasanter lessons. Teachers struck for higher pay and, I hope, for pleasanter pupils. All had one's sympathy, as all rebels necessarily have. There was a solidarity about the grievances of all, and each movement proved how far the revolutionary spirit had spread. The only danger was that the people were making a good thing too common. The strike was the guillotine of the Russian revolution in those days, and even the guillotine had once been worked too hard.

But at the back of the strikes and all the revolutionary movement lay the motive force of speech. In Russia, even more than in other countries, was seen the power of the creative word. A strain of unwonted idealism has long been audible in all Russian literature, and has led to the hope that when Russia's hour came she would advance on finer and higher lines than the more material and self-satisfied peoples of Europe. The hour seemed now to have come, and the hope to be justified. The people were drunken with ideas. After these centuries of suppression, all Russia was revelling in a spiritual debauch of words. Meetings were held almost every night. Entrance could only be gained by ticket; but crowds fought at the doors to hear discussions on the first principles of government, taxation, or law, just as eagerly as English people fight for a place at a football match or an indecent

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farce. To Russians the power of the word was all so new and delightful. I myself remember the first and only time I listened to a debate in the House of Commons. It was the day when Mr. Wyndham was treading "with fairy footstep" through the mazes of Irish statistics. I knew those mazes at least as well as he did, but I have never heard anything so interesting as that debate. And for Russians to listen to a man speaking was like an escape from gaol.

I had noticed it in the Strike Committee and in Gapon's meetings. Without practice or tradition in public speaking, Russia was suddenly found to be a nation of orators. At all the meetings it was the same: speaker after speaker rose, and not one of them faltered for a moment. There was no muddle, or shyness, or hesitation—none of that weary up-and-down cadence, like riding over ridge and furrow, none of that harking back and beating round the bush for words to which our sporting legislators of the shires have long accustomed us at home. In some cases, no doubt, the speeches were dull; but often, even without understanding a thousandth part of what was said, one could tell how true an orator the speaker was from the breathlessness of his hearers, from the feeling of diffused unity in the crowd, and from the deep gasp of applause which greeted the end.

The high level of thought in the speeches might

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be sneered at as an idealist level by dull people who do not believe in ideas. But strength was given to the speakers by the continual danger of the moment and the reality of the horror waiting at the door. As though apologizing for his impertinence in taking any part in such a mighty thing as politics, a workman said humbly to me once: "I know nothing but the street, the factory, and the prison. But I would die for the movement." When his turn came to speak, of course he spoke well. With such a training, he could hardly fail to speak well; and as to law-making, his life was a far more genuine preparation for it than English universities.

There was a similar outburst in newspapers as in speeches. Hitherto most Russian journalists who were not mere hirelings, writing in support of the bureaucracy, had been obliged to work underground, or to write abroad and trust to the ruses of war for a circulation in their own country. During the six weeks after the Manifesto the change was astonishing. For a time there was not a country, except England, where the freedom of the press was so complete. A new paper appeared almost every other day. Now and then a number or two would be confiscated, and sometimes the paper would cease to appear for a while. The first and most notorious case of this suspension was when a little satiric paper, called *The Machine Gun* (*Pulemet*), printed a copy of the Tsar's manifesto with the

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impression of a bloody hand stamped upon it, and the superscription, "Signed and Sealed." This was seized as an insult to the dynasty. The editor was imprisoned, the price of the cartoon went up from five farthings to almost as many pounds, and, when the paper appeared again, its fame was established.

But at the time a cartoon of that kind was mainly prophetic, and most of the papers said what they pleased, and said it with seriousness and self-restraint. Among the very best was the workmen's little paper called *The Russian Gazette*, sold at one farthing. It had been started soon after Father Gapon's petition, and since the Manifesto only one number had been confiscated. Written in the common workman's language which all could understand, it had a very large circulation, but its price kept the funds low, and its news from outside was small. In politics it called itself Social Democratic, but being concerned at first hand with the real workmen and their interests, it touched solid ground, and its tone was the same as one heard at the meetings of the labour delegates.

Next in revolutionary influence came the *New Life* (*Novaya Zhizn*), generally known as Maxim Gorky's paper. He certainly supplied the money and its general policy. Sometimes he wrote a long letter or address in it, and his present wife, the actress of his plays, was nominally editor. But,

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even when Gorky was in St. Petersburg, which was very seldom, the paper was really conducted by the poet Minsky and a few other Social Democrats of high education and theoretic knowledge. The sternest and most official organ of that sect, it followed Marx with doctrinaire exactness, and its teaching was impeded by the stiffness and pedantry that characterize the Social Democrats even in England. No one could question the skill and enthusiasm of its attacks upon the oligarchy and capitalists, but it often devoted more space to sour depreciation of other good Socialists who doubted if Marx had said the last word in human history. It was like a really clever staff officer who, on the morning of the battle, goes from brigade to brigade telling the soldiers what fools all the other officers have made of themselves, and what an immense disaster will ensue if his own plan of attack is not adopted. So it often happened that the truest friends of the movement were in despair at the vanity and exclusiveness of the *New Life*, and irretrievable opportunities passed by while its staff of editors were arranging the future of humanity in neat little circles and squares, as though they were the Creator and men were as obedient as the stars. If you work on German first principles, you are likely to arrive at queer conclusions, because mankind was not made in Germany. But still there was no denying the paper's honesty and zeal, nor

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its great influence within its own wide circle of well-disposed and intelligent people.

The Son of the Country (*Syn Otetchestva*) was an old paper; it had been running off and on for nearly a century; but, since the manifesto, it had become extreme in its Liberalism, and could be grouped as a new paper among the Social Democratic organs. All Russians admitted that it was particularly well written, and being far less pedantic than the *New Life*, it was read by every advanced party and promised to become one of the strongest papers of the revolution.

While I was still in St. Petersburg, at the end of November, some of the famous exiles, who had begun to return to Russia under the promised amnesty, started a paper called the *Beginning* (*Natchalo*). It was distinctly Social Democratic, and perhaps the leading spirit on it was Vera Sassoulitch, who had failed in an attempt to assassinate Trepoff's father during the most gloomy period of tyranny, twenty years before. She had returned from Geneva, old and grey and wrinkled, but almost any night she was to be seen sitting out the revolutionary meetings, talking, writing, or stitching with unflagging energy, and on her face and in her pale grey eyes a fixed and beaming smile, as though at the fulfilment of hopes for which she and so many others had been willing to give their lives.

Not definitely connected with social democracy,

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but extreme in its opposition to the Government, there was another new paper called *Our Life* (*Nacha Zhisn*), which was started in September and at once was recognized for its excellent news and management. It has since increased its reputation, and become one of the leading papers in Russia.

But at that time perhaps the very best of all the papers, both for news and leading articles, was *Russia* (*Russ*). It had been founded three years before, but began to redate its numbers from the Manifesto of October 30th. During the war, it won a reputation by an overwhelming exposure of army scandals, and under the movement it was almost universally read for its progressive policy and fearlessness of speech. At the time, it was edited by one of the sons of Suvorin, the famous editor of the *Novoe Vremya*. Such divergence of political views must have strained the conversation at the family dinner-table, and perhaps it was really a relief at home when the son was shut up in prison, and the paper appeared under the new title of *Molva*.

The two Jewish papers—the *News* (*Novosti*) and the *Stock Exchange Gazette* (*Birshevza Viedomosti*)—were both old, one being nearly the oldest paper in Russia, and the other having run twenty-five years, but both had become very Progressive or even revolutionary. For in Russia, Jews are inevitably revolutionists, however much against their own nature, and the Stock Exchange paper was one of

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the most advanced political organs in the Empire, and had the best news.

At that time, two other Progressive papers had just been started—*Dawn* (*Rassiojet*) and *Russia Renewed* (*Obnovlionnaya Rossiia*), and at Moscow, Professor Miliukoff was on the point of bringing out his new paper called *Life* (*Zhizn*), of which I may speak later on. But there seemed no end to the number of excellent journalists that Russia could supply, just as there seemed no end to the number of excellent speakers. When I think of that sudden outburst of talent, I remember the saying of an Englishman who had lived thirty years in Russia and professed a good-humoured contempt for the whole people from the Court to the dustmen ; “ But unquestionably,” he always added, “ they are the most intelligent race in the world.” In reality, however, it was intensity of conviction and present sense of wrong which converted those inexperienced men into such effective writers and speakers. Where conviction is sincere, habit and training are best away, just as really sincere and original dramas should be performed only by actors unhabituated to the stage.

To oppose these battalions of progress, there were only three or four journals on the reactionary side, and it is significant that none of these were new and nearly all were subsidized. First came the *New Time* (*Novoe Vremya*), almost the only Russian

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paper which is well known by name outside Russia. It is the *Times* of Russia, steadily on the side of the Government, the reaction, and the moneyed classes. Scornful of enthusiasm, deaf to every idea, incredulous of every hope, always ready to impute the vilest motives to reform, it stands like an impenetrable barrier on the road of human progress. Proclaiming itself the champion of stability, and taking law and order for its motto, and the price of funds for its test, it succeeds in pleasing the financier and the official, and its cynical disregard of humanity is matched by its unquestioned influence for evil. A certain dignity of tone, combined with the excellence of its foreign news, has given it a reputation for sobriety and truth, but against the rights of freedom it is virulent in its animosity, and against a leader of the people it will welcome any libel without reserve. To discover where justice lies, one has but to take the opposite view to its own, and to agree with it is a danger-signal that one's sense of right has gone astray. Yet in moments of deep indignation against some governmental shame, it will affect the popular tone and act the reformer's part with whines and deprecations. The scandals of the Japanese war were too flagrant even for its compliant worship of birth and rank, and after the Manifesto had granted freedom of speech it began to demand that freedom with righteous solicitude.

On the same side, though inferior in skill and

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reputation, stood the *Citizen* (*Grashdanin*), heavily subsidized by the Government, and possessing, it was said, a particular influence over the Tsar's perplexed little mind; and the *Petersburg News*, also subsidized, but indignant none the less about the war scandals and the Grand Dukes.

Last of this group came the *Word* (*Slovo*), once famous for its violent attacks upon errors in high places, and for its fearless defence of freedom, especially on behalf of the Old Believers. But after the Manifesto appeared, the tone of the paper changed, and instead of joining like others in the joy of victory, it grew more and more sullen and distrustful of progress. Whether money was the motive of the change, as rumour said, I did not discover, but the paper's influence had to be counted among the reactionary forces, and it was a strong paper.

Even more significant than the printed daily papers were the satiric and illustrated sheets, which appeared as suddenly and in greater numbers. Perhaps the best managed and most constant was the *Observer* (*Zritel*), but the *Signal* (same word in Russian) was almost as good, and below them came the *Arrows* (*Streli*) and the *Libel* (*Strekoza*). The *Vampyre* (same word in Russian) came later, and so did the *Sulphur* (*Jupel*), which was the most artistic of them all, but so bloody and savage that it survived only three numbers. The character of nearly all the cartoons was, indeed, bloody and savage rather than

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humorous. The satire was hardly ever kindly, as it has become in England now that politics are so seldom a matter of life and death. Sometimes, it is true, in those early weeks, Witte was treated with a raillery that might be called gentle. He would be represented as a cook trying in vain to make the dinner come right ; or as a chemist watching an empty bottle labelled "Constitution ;" or as a brood hen sitting on an egg with the same label ; or as an old nurse cherishing a sickly little figure ; or as an acrobat balancing on a slack-rope, while Trepoff held one end, and the red flags of the revolution surged below ; or as a cunning old tailor threading his needle to stitch up the two-headed eagle, which lay dead or stuffed on his board, while an inverted imperial diadem held the flat-iron, and the candle stood in a vodka bottle representing Witte's spirit monopoly. But as a rule the design was far more savage, and the savagery grew as the reaction became stronger, till after the Days of Moscow all the cartoons might have been printed in blood, and most appeared in that colour. Then we were shown the skeleton of death stalking through the devastated streets, or the skeleton of hunger crawling upon the stage from the flies, or the Kremlin floating in blood like an island, or Dubasoff as butcher in a human meat-shop, or foul monsters brooding over the corpses beneath the gallows of freedom. Right through its past history, all Russian art that counts has been either horrible



Ой купивъ дуду на свою біду, да за свої гроші..

WITTE AND THE CONSTITUTION.

WITTE : " I've bought a pipe, and now I can't play it."

From *Sprut*.

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or melancholy—a thing of skeletons and vampires and desolation. The subjects chosen by painters are cruel scenes from war or history, and dreary views of the steppe. The subjects chosen by writers are almost invariably sad. It is part of the unbroken melancholy which pervades all Russian life, and is no less visible on the faces of the people than in the sound of their music. And all this sorrow and savagery and blood lie at the door of a Government which has kept the people poor and depressed, exposed to the constant peril of the scourge, the prison, and secret death.

On the reactionary side, I think, the only satiric paper was the *Harlequin* (*Chout*), and though it was fairly clever, there is an eternal law which forbids the service of satire or letters or any other form of art to the enemies of freedom.

The crowd of Liberal and revolutionary papers was but the visible sign of a grace that took many forms. In reality, perhaps, there were even more parties than papers, and certainly there were many parties that had no paper to represent them. The Anarchists, as I have shown already, could hardly be called a party, at all events in the towns, and no paper was occupied with the abolition of the State as a fetish, when all were insisting upon the strengthening of the State as against the government of the few. But even such a large party as the Social Revolutionists had no organ of their own. Next to the

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Social Democrats, they were the most powerful of the advanced parties. Probably they were even more numerous, but their organization was not so complete, and as they devoted themselves mainly to the peasants, their voice was not so loud in cities. They were the Terrorists of the time; they were what Europe confusedly calls the Anarchists, and it was they who kept the agents of the Government in peril of their lives. Yet they had no paper of their own.

Neither had a large and growing party of the Left Centre, which we may call the Radical as distinguished from the Socialists. They issued a programme which nearly all the advanced parties would have accepted when the time for business came. Like all the rest, they demanded first a Constituent Assembly elected by universal suffrage, and beyond that their ideal of the Russian State consisted in a single chamber, a ministry chosen from the majority, home rule for Poland, Finland, the Caucasus, and the Baltic Provinces, the right of referendum, separation of Church and State, expropriation of Crown and Church lands and of private estates beyond a fixed maximum, free education, and a general militia for defence. Moderate as these demands were, nearly all the revolutionists, except the more starchy among the Social Democrats, would have been content to fight for them and welcome them with joy; but the Radicals had no special organ for their views.

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As in all movements of intense and vital interest, the danger to reform came from division. All were united in their final purpose, but as to methods and strategy the divisions of parties were many and violent. It was the same thing as in a restaurant of Polish students to which I was often invited. There was a long, low room, furnished only with benches and tables. At one end was a piano ; at the other a counter where the student could buy excellent meals at all hours of the day and night for very small payment. Though the university had long been closed owing to the disturbances, the place was always crowded with young men and girls, living in perfect comradeship and much at their ease. One night, a young girl, with clear grey eyes, a demure little face, and pale hair tightly braided, was giving me a very satisfactory lecture in German upon the minute distinctions between all the Polish parties. I heard afterwards that in her zeal for knowledge, she had gained the necessary passport to St. Petersburg by going through the form of marriage with a student whom she had never seen since the ceremony. It is not an unusual device, and I have known girl-students who have even taken "the yellow ticket" as prostitutes in order to reach a university town.

In the midst of her disquisition, she suddenly burst into an attack upon two or three girls at another table who were suspected of betraying true

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comradeship by ordinary flirtation. "I suppose they think themselves rather pretty," she said, "but neither logically nor psychologically do I understand their behaviour." At that moment a few notes sounded on the piano, and to distract her wrath I suggested she should ask for some Polish music.

"Oh, I couldn't speak to that end of the room," she replied ; "the other party has captured it, and the piano besides."

"But you hold the kitchen end," I remarked consolingly.

"I am sorry to say our possession is not exclusive," she answered, with a look that was bloodthirsty in its conviction of righteousness. Then she took a shining revolver from her pocket, examined its action, said good-bye to her friends, and stalked through the enemy's camp without a sign either of fear or pardon.

She was herself a Social Democrat of the most attractive though sternest type, and as such, she believed in international fraternity. But "the other party" were Polish Revolutionists, or Democratic Poles, or something just wrong, and they followed the old-fashioned faith of nationality ; and so the room was split by an invisible but impassable barrier. To me it all seemed rather a pity, when I thought of the long years of conflict which must pass before they reached the separating point in their

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ideals, and how few would live to see a single item in their programme fulfilled. Yet I know that at the first note of the revolution, Social Democrats, Polish Revolutionists, Democratic Poles, flirtatious girls, and all would be ready to die together for Poland's freedom. And so probably they will have to die.

It was the same throughout the length and breadth of Russia in those happy weeks. Divisions are the evidences of life, and Russia was seething with life like the world in the days of creation. But one thought exhilarated all young and happy minds—the thought of liberty. And if to a middle-aged man and a stranger in the country it was a joy then to be alive, to the young and to the Russian it must indeed have been very heaven.

DIARY OF EVENTS

December 6.—General Sakharoff, who had succeeded Kuropatkin as Minister of War, and had lately been appointed Governor-General of the Saratoff district on the Volga, was shot in his office at Saratoff by a woman, a Social Revolutionist, who said, when she was arrested, "Now he can cause the peasants no more suffering."

December 7.—The Strike Committee (Central Labour Committee in St. Petersburg) called on the work-people to withdraw their money from the savings-banks. They rightly believed that bankruptcy was the best way of overthrowing the Government.

December 9.—Khroustoloff, the President of the Strike

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Committee, and three other leading delegates were arrested at the Printers' Union and imprisoned.

At this time severe fighting was renewed in the Caucasus between the Tartars and Armenians.

There was also a violent outbreak of revolution in Riga, and the Letts of the three Baltic Provinces of Esthonia, Livonia, and Courland, rose against the Government, and burnt some of the country houses belonging to German landowners who had inherited estates from the Teutonic Orders of Knight and other Prussian conquerors in the Middle Ages.

December 16.—The Council of Workmen's Delegates (Strike Committee), combined with the Committee of the Peasants' Congress, the Committee of the Social Democratic Workmen's Party, and the Committee of the Social Revolutionists, issued another manifesto on Government finance. The following extracts show its tendency :—

“The Government is on the verge of bankruptcy. With the capital obtained by foreign loans, it has built railways and fleets and fortresses, and supplied itself with arms. The foreign sources of capital are now dried up. The Government orders have ceased, and the merchants and factory-owners, accustomed to enrich themselves at the expense of the State, are closing their offices. No one is sure of the morrow.

“The Government has wasted all the State revenues on the army and the fleet. There are no schools, and the roads are neglected. Troops throughout the country are disaffected, impoverished, and hungry. The Government has robbed the State savings-banks. The capital of small investors has been played with on the Bourse. The gold reserve of the State Bank is insignificant compared with the demands of the State loans and commercial transactions.

“The Government covers the interest on old loans by

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contracting new loans. Year by year it publishes false estimates of the revenue and expenditure, so as to show a surplus instead of the real deficit.

“Only after the fall of the autocracy can a Constituent Assembly put an end to this financial ruin. The national representatives must then liquidate the debts as soon as possible.

“There is but one way out of this abyss—the overthrow of the Government, and the removal of its last weapon. We must take from it the last source of its existence—its financial revenue.

“The Government is issuing orders against the people as though Russia were a conquered country. We have decided not to allow the payment of debts contracted by the Tsar’s Government, since it has openly waged war against the whole nation.

“We call on you to withdraw your deposits from the savings banks, and to refuse to pay taxes, or to take bank-notes, or to subscribe to loans.”

This manifesto showed how clearly the leaders of the working classes realized that the control of finance is the basis of political power.

The Government recognized it too, and took immediate measures.

On the 14th the Tsar had proclaimed “his inflexible will to realize with all possible speed the reforms he had granted.”

On the 16th came a Government message denouncing “the groups who are threatening the Government, society, and all the population who do not share their views,” and threatening imprisonment against all strikers and inciters to strike.

That evening the hall of the Free Economic Society, which I described in the first chapter, was surrounded by

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troops and police. Three hundred men and women were arrested, and two hundred and sixty-four of them were imprisoned, including twenty of the Executive.

At the same time the editors of all the papers which had published the Committee's manifesto were arrested, and their papers suppressed. Of the leading dailies, only the reptile *Novoe Vremya* continued to appear.

December 18.—An entirely new council and executive were appointed for the Strike Committee, and at once they determined on another general strike. "The Government has declared civil war," ran the decree, "and, as it wants war, it shall have it."

In the mean time, on December 8th, I had gone to Moscow, and it was to Moscow that the centre of revolution now shifted. But before I take up the narrative of the rising in that city, I will describe a few days' visit I made from there into the open country and the villages where peasants live. The change in the order of date is unimportant, and the story of Moscow can then follow continuously.



PEASANT SLEDGES.



A PRIVATE SLEDGE.

CHAPTER V

THE OPEN LAND

UNDER the waning moon, before the dawn of a December day, I drove out of the town of Toula in my tiny sledge—so close to the snow that the great black horse with his high yoke looked monstrous in the twilight. It is a typical Russian town, about a hundred miles south of Moscow, and as nearly as possible in the centre of the country. Two great roads cross each other there, and pass on to the points of the compass. Oldish churches, surrounded by a fortified wall, make a kind of Kremlin. Ancient houses conceal cavernous shops in the thickness of their own walls. Across a wooden bridge stands the Government small-arms factory, with workmen's villages beyond. Strange figures in filthy rags moved up and down, beggars and shaggy peasants, high-school boys, and fur-capped girls. It has long been rather a revolutionary little town, and during the strike, ten days before, nineteen workmen had been shot upon the street.

In spite of solemn warnings, I had come out from the cities to see something of the country,

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having with difficulty induced a ruined German-Russian to venture with me as interpreter, for the sake of bread. As usual, the danger was nothing compared to the fear. What danger there was in the villages came from the police agents and officials, who hounded on the peasants with the cry that every stranger was a revolutionist conspiring against the Tsar to rob them of God and the land. For in those progressive days the police were dreading lest they should lose their livelihood of flogging and brutality at fifteen shillings a week.

My road went uphill to a high and bare plain, over which the snow was driven by the wind in showers so blinding that the horse kept turning round and appealing to us as reasonable beings to return. Horizon, road, and every mark were lost in whirling grey. But, after we had struggled on for two or three hours, the snow ceased to fall, and the wintry sun appeared low in the sky, making the distant ridges of the wide country shine with pale crimson or gleam like a far-off sea. Most of the land was bare and open ground, the snow blotting out the "stripes" where the peasants grew their crops in summer. But as we went further, lengths of forest came into view, looking brown at a distance, though generally made up of young silver birch, their silky white stems flecked with black. Birch woods supply the fuel of the country ; next to food, the first necessity of the peasant's life. There was

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some oak, but very little fir or pine. The birch in this region is the favourite, either because it grows best or burns best ; and it is almost the only fuel in Moscow.

The peasants' wooden sleighs passing to and fro bore loads of sawn birch, dragged by miserable little ponies, so caked with mire that their coats looked like a crocodile's armour. At their side floundered the peasants in sheepskin jackets, with the wool side turned inwards. The jacket was gathered with a belt round the waist, and the skirt stuck out all round, reaching to the knees. Then came the high top-boots of felt or bast, rarely of leather. Men and women were not to be distinguished, except that, instead of a cap, the women usually wore a handkerchief or shawl knotted over head and ears. There was no special grace about the costume ; but even the rich ladies of Russian cities find it hard to appear graceful when padded round with fur and wool six or seven inches deep. At the best, they can only appear rich.

Beside the road at one place stood a mouldering wooden inn (*tractir*), where passers-by could get thawed and have a glass of tea at three farthings. The owner of the estate, being something of a philanthropist or a teetotaller for others, had forbidden beer and spirits, so that the innkeeper was pale with anxiety how to pay his £4 rent, to say nothing of the taxes. Should he borrow, and go to

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ruin that way, or allow himself to be flogged to prove his poverty? I suggested that times were changing, and flogging might cease, but he only smiled with the politeness of superior knowledge. "No flogging, no taxes," was to him the law of government.

In one corner hung three great icons, or holy pictures of the saints, glittering with tin and brass—very different in size and expense from the miniature icon which hangs in every bedroom of the wealthy Russian hotels, as a kind of apology to God, like our grace at a City dinner. Otherwise, there was no ornament in the house, except one of those ill-omened iron mugs, for which the crowd crushed each other to death on the coronation day of the present unhappy Tsar, nine years before, when the plain of Khodinsky Polé, on the north-west outskirts of Moscow, stood thick with suffocated peasants.

I next passed a great smelting works, newly finished, its fine furnaces and machinery never used, but already deserted and allowed to go to ruin. I could not discover whose money had been devoted to this characteristic fraud, or into whose pockets it had passed. Then came a few small gardens and summer residences built on the Crown land; for most of the land in that district is part of the Tsar's vast estates, amounting to a fortieth part of the whole of European Russia, not counting the landed

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property of the Imperial family. But all the houses were deserted and empty, and one was burnt, and smouldered still.

Driving further on, I came to a large country house, where one of the ancient families of the Russian nobility was still living in the midst of its own land. I happened to be bringing them letters from friends, as the post was not working, and I found a house-party there, beguiling the winter day with much the same occupations as a house-party in England—doing embroidery, playing battledore with racquets and a soft ball, pushing a marble up a kind of bagatelle-board, examining their guns, and taking the dogs for walks in the woods. At a wandering luncheon of various courses, they maintained a quiet converse, marked by the gracious silliness, the “cheerful stoicism,” which is the justification of the aristocrat’s existence.

It was all a fine piece of self-reserve, for inwardly their mood was serious and apprehensive. They had just heard that the country-house of a friend and neighbour had been burnt to the ground by his peasants, though the family had escaped, with their lives. One of the ladies had a son in the army, and they had just heard of a terrible riot and mutiny in his garrison town. Another lady’s son had married a rich heiress, and they had just heard that the three country residences of her parents had been utterly destroyed by the peasants,

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and now she was rich no more. From every side came tales of loss and danger, and no one could say what the end would be.

For themselves, they were just waiting helplessly to see what would happen. Polite, charming, highly educated, well dressed, healthy, fond of sport and country life, full of good will and high intentions, they were so like our own country squires and aristocracy at their best—so like the people who used to be held up to us as the school of manners and the producers of the fine old English stock—that only the dreariest of Social Democrats could have refused them sympathy. They were themselves fairly conscious of the absurdities in their own position, but the only protest or complaint that they made was to say they were getting a little tired of perpetual parallels between themselves and the aristocrats of the French Revolution, whose heads were cut off so rapidly.

In the afternoon my sledge took me further into the unlimited and desolate country, till at last we came to a village fairly typical of that district—not a rich part of Russia nor yet so starving poor as the famine provinces which lay close by it. The village was built in one long street, with about forty separated cottages on each side. A few of the cottages had bits of brick in the walls or round the windows, but wood was almost the only

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building material, and the roofs, though sometimes of flat iron plates, painted green, were generally thatched. In this particular village there was no school and no church, but from the high ground above it I could see a church about two miles off, and that, no doubt, was near enough. There were two shops and an inn, all just like the other cottages. Each house had a separate wattle shed near it, for fodder, stores, and perhaps to shelter the beasts in summer. In winter they have to be brought into the dwelling-house for warmth.

By the invitation of a peasant I went into his cottage. The man was rather above the ordinary type, being tall and straight. But he had the thoughtful and quiet look of the average peasant, as well as the long, dark hair and shaggy appearance. His wife was quite the usual woman—short, ungainly, and possessing no visible beauty except, perhaps, patience. On the faces of both was the green look of hunger, almost invariable in the peasants I have seen. The outside door of the house opened into the cattle-room, where a sickly cow was dragging out the winter. There was room for a horse, but the people had been obliged to sell their horse that autumn to pay the taxes and their debts to the Koulak or village usurer. From the Koulak, too, I suppose, they would borrow the money to hire another horse in the summer, as they said they intended. For

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no peasant can get through his work without a horse.

A wooden partition separated the cattle from the dwelling-room, the house being designed exactly like an Irish cabin, except that the white brick construction of the stove projected on both sides of the partition, thus warming the cow and the family both. As every one knows, the peasant's stove is a large and wonderful edifice, full of mysterious holes and caverns for cooking and baking, and even for the dry roasting process which serves the family as a bath. Close beside it were two broad, wooden shelves on which the inmates slept—the parents above, the five children underneath. There was no bedding of any kind, except one worn coverlet or shawl on each shelf.

The children had made their shelf into a day-nursery as well as a bed, for they were all rolling about on it and biting each other, imagining a game of wolf, I think, though wolves are not common there. All were bare-legged, and quite naked but for loose red shirts reaching to their knees. Of course, they went out sometimes, but there were not enough clothes to send them all out together at once in winter. The furniture of the home was a wooden box, which was the seat of honour, a short bench, a table, and a small wooden loom, on the universal model of primitive manufacture. Both man and woman could weave,

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and they were making yards of a coarse stuff dyed with red madder, exactly the same as the women make for their petticoats on Achill Island.

Probably the loom brought in an important part of the family's income, for the sale of the horse showed that they could not live off the land alone. Yet the man boasted that his bit of land, on which he grew potatoes, oats, and rye, was his absolute property, and when I tried to ask him whether the village community did not redistribute his land with the rest every twelve years, as I had read in books, he became very violent and showed no scientific interest at all in the sociological importance of the Mir. The working of the Mir was the only thing I thought I did understand when I came to Russia, and it was disconcerting to find that the first peasant I spoke to had never heard of such an arrangement. I still do not know what mistake he or I can have made. He may have been only insisting on the peasant's touching faith that the land is the natural possession of the man who cultivates it, and can never be taken from him, even by the Tsar. Anyhow, he was terribly afraid that I had come to shake that belief in some way, and I thought it best to turn the conversation to the cow.

As to the Tsar's recent promise to remit next year half the annual payment still due to the Treasury for the original purchase of the land, this

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peasant, in common, I believe, with all others, thought nothing of it. To them the manifesto was so much "dirty paper." They knew very well that even if half were remitted, the Crown agents would come down upon them for arrears. They also knew dimly that since the liberation of the serfs more than forty years ago, the peasants have paid the extreme value of the land twice over. So they have ceased to concern themselves about any manifesto which does not surrender to them the mass of land which they regard as rightfully theirs.

While I was in the cottage, an old man came up with a canvas bag over his shoulder, and knocked at the door. Though obviously in the sink of poverty, he was not a professional beggar, but only one of that large class of peasants who are driven by age or misfortune to go round the villages and ask for scraps to keep them alive till better times. Accordingly he came in as if for a friendly call, laid his bag on the table with its mouth open, and joined in the conversation. When we were going out again, the woman slipped some squares of black bread into the bag as though by stealth, and he took it up and walked off without further remark on either side. It was the perfection both of appeal and kindness.

At parting, I looked again at the peasant and his wife, in their clean poverty, with the marks



TOLSTOY'S HOME.



PEASANTS

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of their almost passionate labour upon them and their five children growing up round their knees, and certainly it did seem incredible that these were just the people who are marched off to the village police-court, are tied face downwards to a sloping bench, have their clothes turned up, and are flogged with whips or rods by officials and police because they cannot pay the taxes for the Japanese war, or for the interest on the French loans.

Yet, in the last resort, it is upon violence almost as brutalizing and indecent that all Empires are founded, and I was all the more ready to welcome what Tolstoy said to me next day, when he received me—as generously as he receives every one—in his “Bright Home” (*Jasnaia Poliana*) as the country-house is called. He told me that, among the many other plans of work which he could not live to finish, he was then engaged on a book to be called “The End of an Age.”

“You are young and I am old,” he said, “but as you grow older you will find, as I have found, that day follows day, and there does not seem much change in you, till suddenly you hear people speaking of you as an old man. It is the same with an age in history ; day follows day, and there does not seem to be much change, till suddenly it is found that the age has become old. It is finished, it is out of date.

“The present movement in Russia is not a riot,

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it is not even a revolution, it is the end of an age. And the age that is ending is the age of Empires—the collection of smaller States under one large State. There is no true community of heart or thought between Russia, Finland, Poland, the Caucasus, and all our other States and races. Or what have Hungary, Bohemia, and Styria, or the Tyrol to do with Austria? No more than Canada, Australia, India, or Ireland have to do with England. People are now beginning to see the absurdity of these things, and in the end people are reasonable, That is why the age of Empires is passing away.

“They tell me, for instance, that if the Russian Empire ceased to exist, swarms of Japanese would overrun our country and destroy our race. But the Japanese also are reasonable people, and if they came and found how much better off we were without any Empire at all, they would go home and imitate our example.”

The whole argument, which ran on with a half-ironic simplicity of this kind, was magnificent, not so much for its daring as for its quiet confidence in human reason. I remembered how for the last twenty years all the brazen trumpets of vulgarity had been sounding the note of Empire over us as the one great and stirring purpose of existence. And here was this rugged old man calmly telling me, as though it were something of a platitude, that we had just come to the end of an age—the age of

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Empires. There he sat in the familiar grey shirt without coat or collar, the belt round the waist, and the high leather top-boots (for he had just tramped round his land in the snow), quietly following out the exact logic of his principles, no matter where it might lead him. He was seventy-seven, and in terms of years one was forced, as he said, to call him old. The spirit had retired more deeply into the shrunk and wrinkled form. But under the shaggy brows, the grey-green eyes still looked out with the clearness of profound thought and fearless simplicity which have made him the greatest rebel in the world.

As to the present condition of his own country, he believed, as is well known from his writings, that the return of the land to the peasants is the only possible cure for Russia's misery. He told me that he would accept Henry George's method of nationalization, or any other which gave the peasants a true hold on the land they work. He quoted Kropotkin's investigations into "intensive culture" to prove that, with improved methods, there is plenty of land in Russia to maintain an immensely increased population. As things stood, less than a third of the cultivated land was held by peasants or village communities, and less than a quarter of the cultivable land was used at all. The Tsar should at once restore the land to the peasants. With their long experience of the communal system,

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they could then manage very well for themselves without any State at all, as they had successfully proved in the Siberian colonies ; for communism ran in the Russian blood, and its ideal had never been lost in the country.

When I suggested that a town question had also arisen now, besides the claim of peasants to the land, he admitted that town influence was the greatest danger. "Towns," he said, "are the places where mankind has begun to rot, and unhappily the rottenness spreads. The mistake of our Liberal politicians in the towns is that they are always preaching the blessings of some English or American constitution. But constitutions of that kind, having once been realized, have already become things of the past. They belong to a different age from ours, and an ideal, whether in statesmanship or art, is never a thing of the past, but always of the future. For Russia as she exists now, we ought to aim at something entirely different from your worn-out methods of government."

So he conversed through the winter morning, eager to speak, and as eager to hear. He asked much about Central Africa from which I had lately returned, and much about the new national movement in Ireland, nor should I have been surprised if he had continued the conversation in Gaelic, so fresh and vigorous was his interest in the world. Only when I told him rather carelessly, that the intellectual

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movement there was producing a large number of poets, his face fell, and he turned to other things, merely remarking that poets were very little good. In passing, he said he had been pleased to find that his fellow Puritan, Mr. Bernard Shaw, thought very lightly of Shakespeare, in whom he had never himself discovered any satisfaction, though he had read him once all through in English, and twice in German.

But it was not his interest in the common affairs of the world that gave him his true attraction. Apart from all this, there hung over him that separate and distinguishing grace which our fathers called sanctity and considered a thing to be worshipped. It was the grace of a toilsome and abstemious life, unflinchingly devoted to one high aim, and sacrificing all worldly pleasure and success to an ideal which could never be reached. I believe the modern name for it is fanaticism.

I say one high aim, for I see no reason to agree with the many critics who draw a sharp dividing line in his career and in the process of his mind. All the principles of his later teaching are to be found illustrated in the two great imaginative works of his earlier manhood, and if there is any fault to be found with a life so courageous and inspiring, I should seek it only in a rather inhuman and remorseless consistency of reason—a logic which, having for instance, condemned the pleasures of sense, would doom the

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human race to rapid extinction because life cannot be maintained and handed on without pleasure. But such returns to the strict Christianity of earlier centuries ought not to astonish people who call themselves Christians, especially as there seems no danger at present that the logic of their teaching will be followed in human action. And, in any case, I should rather leave it to others to reveal such limitations as they may find in so beneficent and gracious a personality.



TOLSTOY IN MIDDLE AGE.

CHAPTER VI

THE STATE OF MOSCOW

ON the morning of Saturday, December 9th, the day after I had arrived in Moscow, I happened to be passing the unfinished buildings of the empty University. Minute snow was lashing through the air before a bitter wind, but it thawed as it fell, and people in goloshes went slopping about among the filthy puddles of the street.

Trailing in disorder through the dirt and wind, mixed up with the market people and the little open cabs like sledges that were always dashing up and down with men and women in furs, came a loose string of soldiers, slowly making their way westward. They had just passed the canvas booths where butchers, fishmongers, greengrocers and other loyalists set upon the students with knives the month before ; they had reached the point where the soldiers from behind walls fired blindly into the thick of the unarmed procession which accompanied the funeral of the student Baumann. There they halted, because the cross road which passes the great Riding School Barrack and cuts the University in

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half was blocked with traffic, and then a few passers-by began to look at them curiously.

They were not to be called a column, 'nor were they organized as an advanced party. They were not organized at all ; but a few cavalry came first, their hairy little horses throwing up a steam into the wind ; then a few straggling infantry—not more than half a battalion—covered with filth, their uniforms torn and patched, some in low, flat caps like our own men, some in high, furry caps, matted with mud and snow. And under the caps were faces yellow, thin, and as though bemused with wonder. Behind the infantry followed a rambling line of various kinds of cart, and inside the carts were stretched muffled and pallid forms, their heads or arms or feet bound up with dirty and blood-stained bandages.

These were the soldiers returning from the war, the van and first instalment of that great and ruined army coming home. At last they had completed the 5000 or 6000 miles of their journey from the starving East, across the frozen lake, and through the long Siberian plains, and were alive in the heart of their own country again. And this was how they were received. Certainly, the Moscow municipality had intended to arrange some sort of festivities at the station. They had intended to give little presents to the men—something in the shape of chocolates and cigarettes that comfort the hearts of heroes. They had prepared little decorations

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for the officers, with the inscription, "To the defenders of the country." But whether these festivities were ever held and these little presents given, no one could tell me. The papers had announced that the army from the Far East would begin to arrive on the Sunday. The paternal Government took care that they should arrive on the Saturday.

Probably the town officials retained for themselves their little offerings to patriotism, and will wear the war decorations with pride at family parties. So little interest was taken in the whole thing that the evening papers continued to announce that the army would begin to arrive on the morrow. The market people and cabdrivers stopped for a moment to look at them before hurrying on through the snow, and no further notice of any kind was taken of the defenders of the country.

So they drifted westward, down the dirty streets, and disappeared. On reaching the barracks, the Reservists among them were discharged, and the crowds of beggars who, with threats and curses, violently demanded the milk of human kindness at every corner, were increased by many tattered figures. They limped about in traces of departed uniforms, and as they passed, people said, "A soldier from the war." One night I saw two or three of them seated on a curbstone beside a fire which had been lighted in a street. One was swaying gently

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backwards and forwards and continually repeating, "At home and alive! at home and alive!" The others took no notice, but stared like imbeciles into the flames.

Some were drafted back by rail to their villages, and the terror of comfortable people was that they would there spread the tale of mismanagement, corruption, and misery till all the peasants would rise in fury and sweep upon the cities in ravenous and overwhelming hordes. Sometimes a dim rumour reached us from the Far East of a distracted army, mutinous and starving; maddened with hardship and the longing for home, but unable to crowd into the worn-out trains that crept along those thousands of miles of single line, choked with stores and blocked by continual accidents and strikes. If they should all come home—all the 500,000 or 600,000 of them at once? The comfortable citizens—and even in Moscow there were such people—shuddered in their furs and thanked Heaven for the difficulties of that narrow road.

On the other hand, a big manufacturer told me he was delighted to see the army returning. "For now," he said, "the Reservists on garrison duty here will be dismissed, and we can always trust the Line to obey their officers and shoot in defence of law and order." At the time I hoped he was oversanguine. In Russia there is no caste of soldiers as with us. All come from the people, and in a year

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or two will return to the people. The Line are exactly the same kind of men as the Reservists, only younger. Of course, it might happen that, being younger, they would more likely obey, for to most people obedience is the easiest thing to do, and a young man in uniform is almost sure to fall into it. But for the moment that was to me just the one question of the future ; would the Line obey their officers and shoot in defence of law and order ?

There were rumours about the disaffection of a good many battalions. The Rostoff regiment got up a little mutiny on its own account one day, and planted guns at the corners of their barracks, but they were soon won back by promises of bodily comfort. For the rest, the troops patrolled the streets in mounted and unmounted parties day and night, but no one knew whether they represented a Government or not. Their chief duties were concentrated round the great block of Post Office buildings. For all day long large groups of postal clerks and officials on strike were gathered upon the pavements there, like working bees around a ruined hive, and in the neighbouring boulevard gardens, where girls and children skated, they assembled in eager controversy.

On the Monday morning (December 11th), I saw there a feeble little attempt to rush a mail-cart starting for the provinces, or for the St. Petersburg station, under mounted escort. In a moment two

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Cossack patrols wheeled round and dashed at full gallop into the crowd, striking blindly at the nearest heads with the terrible nagaikas or loaded whips which I described before. Where the patrols had passed, men, women, and little girls, lay felled to the ground or stood screaming with pain while blood ran down their faces. Pushing, stumbling, and scrambling for life, the crowd fled in panic before the stroke of the hoofs and the whirling whips. Then I knew that until they could face violence with some sort of organized front, the revolutionists had better stay at home. Against twenty men in uniform, five hundred had no chance. As a gigantic Caucasian cried in scorn the night before to a meeting of peaceful and scientific Social Democrats, "The party that commands force is the Government." Who would command force was at that time the most important question in Russia, and no one was certain how it should be answered from day to day.

In the ordinary affairs of life we enjoyed liberty tempered by assassination. The advance from tyranny supported by execution was immeasurable, and it had all been accomplished in about six weeks. In that old city, the natural centre of Russian life both by position and trade, were gathered some 1,100,000 souls who had never known liberty before, either in politics, economics, or thought. It was very natural that they should not know exactly

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what to make of the change at first. The surprising thing was to see how rapidly their instinct for organization and self-government developed, especially in the working classes. Whether one ought to trace this faculty to the old habit of the village community among the peasants, I am not sure. But I think it certain that the feeling for association and common action—the feeling of “mutual aid” as Kropotkin calls it—is very widely extended among Russians.

Every one was then waiting for the next step in history, and the wildest rumours flew. At every corner and in every restaurant stood prophets foretelling the fates, and winning the momentary applause of delight or terror. But, except for such rewards, the time of prophets was not more valuable than usual, and for ordinary people, whose perceptions are blind to futurity, the real points of interest were still the postal strike and the rapid formation of unions. The loss to friendship and business owing to the cessation of letters was so severe, that the leaders of finance and commerce in Moscow drew up a petition to Witte and Durnavo, urging them to grant the economic demands, especially the right of union, even if no political demands were considered. The Government replied with a manifesto dismissing one thousand of the postal strikers offhand, and making all strikes among Government servants a criminal offence.

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The hardship was great. Many of the strikers had served fifteen years or more, and were entitled to pensions, which they now lost. Many lived in Government quarters, from which they were now evicted. The Progressives certainly did all that they could to assist them. At all lectures and meetings, such as were held in various parts of the city every night, the bag was sent round for aid to the strikers. At one lecture I counted seven bags—chiefly students' caps—going round for various righteous causes. In one of the most moderate of all Liberal papers—the *Russian News*—a strike fund was organized for the women and children, and it reached about £5000 before the Government clutched it and put it in its own pocket. In all Progressive papers you read advertisements that Mr. or Mrs. So-and-So would undertake to feed so many strikers for so many days, or to house the children. I knew three Socialist families of quite poor people who took in one or two children of strikers every day to share their dinner. The noticeable thing was that the children were fed, no matter what party of Socialism their parents belonged to. All the workers knew that the strike so far had been the people's only weapon. The Government had two—hunger and the rifle.

Nearly every night meetings were held for the new unions which were springing up on every side. The whole of Moscow, which is built in concentric

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circles round the Kremlin or eminent citadel overhanging the little river, had been divided off into wedges, or "rays," as they were called, and each ray sent so many delegates to the central committee—corresponding to the Council of Labour Delegates in St. Petersburg—which superintended the whole labour question, and had to decide the moment for strikes. But besides the central organizations, almost every trade was forming its own union of defence.

First came the great Railway Union, which controlled the powerful instrument of the railway strikes, and had its headquarters in Moscow, because the city is the obvious centre of all Russian railways. Perhaps next in size, though hardly in importance, came the peculiar union of Floor Polishers—a class of workers unknown in England, because we are not clean enough to have parquettèd floors. But in Moscow they were said to number thirty thousand in the union. There were other large unions besides—the tailors', the metalworkers', the waiters', the jewellers', and a very strong printers' union called "The Society of the Printed Word," said to be the oldest in Russia, and rising almost to the dignity of a knightly order by its title. The Union of Bathmen and Bathwomen, a very large class of labour in Russia, is also old, and in those weeks they came to the very satisfactory decision of declaring a boycott against

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the editor of Katkoff's famous old clerical and reactionary paper, the *Moscow News* (*Moskovskaya Vedomosti*). No minister of the union would wash the editor of the *Moscow News* at any price.

One evening I was present at the formation of two new unions in very different classes of labour. First I went to an immense meeting of tea-packers in a summer theatre, attached to the Aumont, a music hall of easy virtue. But the theatre had now been boarded up into a meeting-house as more suitable for the times. Packers of the Chinese tea that comes overland are naturally a large class in Moscow, for the tea is still the Russian national drink, in spite of the deadly blend from Ceylon which is slowly being introduced. The packers are said to number about six thousand, and forty companies sent deputies to the meeting, though some of the companies employed only eight or ten hands. It is an unhealthy trade, the dust leading to consumption; and of all the many meetings I attended it was only here that I found the voices feeble and toneless. Wages run from half a crown a week for boys and girls up £1 a week for the best men. But in the trade there is an ancient peculiarity that the wife of the owner or manager has to supply a free midday dinner for the hands, and, as one of the delegates said, "Apparently she cooks it in hell."

The other new union was formed at a meeting of shop assistants, conducted with that suavity and

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grandeur of manner which one always notices at meetings of this class. It comes from watching the grace of the shopwalkers, who alone carry the dignified and charming traditions of the old noblesse into modern life. The meeting was occupied for many hours in discussing whether the union should attend only to the assistants' interests, or should enter into wider life as a political force. The Social Democrats urged them to be bold, and, as usual, they had their way. They were far the most strongly organized party; they had their speakers ready at every meeting, and they played their "minimum programme" of quietly progressive measures with great effect. Their opponents were unprepared, and on this occasion were almost too polite to argue. I came away soon after midnight, but it was obvious that the Shop Assistants' Union would be a Social Democratic force before dawn.

Mid-winter is the height of the season for learning, art, and pleasure, but Moscow was neither gay nor learned. Reading and fiddling seemed equally irrelevant. So were painting, poetry, love-making, and all the other pleasant arts. In the big restaurant of the Métropole, it is true, an orchestra still maintained a pretence of joy, and poured out its vapid tunes to the rare guests who sat like shipwrecked sailors scattered on a vasty deep, and struggled to be gay. But, like a middle-aged picnic on the Thames, the thing was too deliberate a happiness, and too

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conscious of its failure. "We must keep our spirits up, you know," I heard a youth say to an elderly gentleman as he poured out the champagne. But it was no good. The elderly gentleman had obviously dined well daily for many years, and was overwhelmed at the solemn thought that at any moment dinners might end for ever. Day and night he was living in "the haggard element of fear."

The University was closed. Her seven thousand students were scattered, some to their homes, some to their lodgings in the city, where for the most part they swelled the army of the Social Democrats, and spent their time discussing maximum and minimum programmes and the socialization of productivity. They were also collecting arms.

"It was impossible to keep open. The students would insist on turning the quadrangle into a Fort Chabrol," said Professor Maniukoff, the new Rector of the University, a learned economist and advanced politician, who, being prohibited from studying grievances nearer home, had won fame by specializing on the Irish land question. So the University was closed, the professors were compelled to pursue research without the due endowment of fees, and their wives and babies had to manage upon half the family income.

Many of them took to lecturing, not for pay, but because it was the only thing they could do for the Movement. One night I listened to one who

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lectured for nearly two hours on the comparative history of amnesties during the last few centuries, with a very close application to the present time. He still called himself a Professor, though he had been exiled from his Chair for so many years that his name had long been forgotten, and, like most of the exiles, he came back to a world which regarded him with a considerate but uneasy pity, as we should all regard the dead if they returned. For nearly thirty years he had lived in Bulgaria, surely not too far away to be remembered, and now he was lecturing again in Moscow, an old man, lame and blind, dressed in a frock-coat and worsted slippers. His nice little granddaughter guided his steps, kept his water-glass full, reminded him every half-hour of the flight of time (which he bore patiently), and put him right about his dates, which made the audience smile. Otherwise, the large lecture hall, packed with the intellectual, listened intently, but showed no sign of approval until the end. The portrait of the Tsar had been carefully removed from behind the chair, and only the gaunt iron staples showed where it had hung.

Another evening, in one of those dubious theatres which had just been converted to decent use, I heard a Professor deliver an immense discourse upon the first principles of Social Democracy before an audience half composed of working people. They also listened patiently, but the moment of

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real excitement came when the lecturer ceased, and three young soldiers sprang upon the stage and shouted that, on the highest economic principles, they too had struck, and would Cossack it no more. "I have flung away the uniform!" shouted one, who was apparelled in a long dressing-gown. "No more fools of officers over me!" shouted another. "And they fed us like swine!" shouted the third, who was just economically drunk. The applause that rocked the audience was one of the grandest noises I have ever heard. If only all the army would follow the example of those three gallant musketeers! But that night they vanished from the blaze of glory, and I heard of them no more.

Vanished too were the Zemstvoists, the men who, in July, had impeached the Government in an overwhelming series of accusations. Since the death of their hero, Prince Sergius Troubetskoy, their heart had failed them, and in November, when they met again in congress and their chance had come, they wasted the precious days in discussions upon Witte's character, just like a suburban essay society discussing Hamlet. But time was going fast just then, and before they had settled Witte's psychology to their satisfaction they were forgotten. They had meant so well by their counsels of moderation and attempts to imitate the British Constitution, but rushing time

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had left them lonely. Yet Moscow was rather strong in Liberal papers, which the bourgeoisie were glad to accept as protests against the extremes of socialism. The *Russian News*, for instance, edited by white-haired Sobolevski, with a grey-haired staff, was a strictly moderate paper, as I have said, though its writers had become so inspired by the youthfulness of the time that their articles would have sent them a year before to meditate in prison or exile upon the license of governments.

Then again, the first Sunday I was in Moscow, Professor Miliukoff brought out his new paper called *Life* (*Zhizn*) on simple and moderate lines. He began with a long and earnest appeal for the unity of Progressive parties against the common enemy of Absolutism. "Let us all combine," he cried, "into a bloc, and present a solid front to the ancient tyranny and new reaction. When Absolutism is overthrown, there will be time enough to discuss the divergent lines of our own programmes." Every one respected Professor Miliukoff, and was cheered by his eternal hopefulness. The advice was obviously sensible. Its only fault was that it was sensible to commonplace—just too obviously sensible for times of high exhilaration, when the position of the moderate man is always painful and usually neglected. Neither workmen nor Social Democrats cared in the least for a Liberal alliance. They knew that, in any case, the Liberals

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would join them in the fight against Absolutism, and to the truly revolutionary spirit Liberalism is always suspect. A significant cartoon came out that week, called "The Hare at the Hunt." The lion of the proletariat has sprung upon the Bear of tyranny ; but in the foreground the Hare of the bourgeoisie is seen hastening up and delicately nibbling at one of the dead Bear's ears, as much as to say, "Please, give me a little bit too!" A little bit might be given to the Moderates, but the proletariat were determined to keep the lion's share.

One day, for the sake of comparison with the proletariat of St. Petersburg, I went over a large and very rich factory, which almost holds a monopoly in candles, and the darkness of Northern Russia for six months in the year makes a candle monopoly valuable. At the end of October a serious riot had occurred there, and the front of the mill was still a wreck of bricks and broken glass. The strikers had then demanded a 50 per cent. rise in wages, an eight-hour day, a lodging allowance of 6s. to 10s. a month, pensions of half wages after fifteen years' work, and pensions of full wages after twenty-five years. When I was there, they had just begun work again on a rise of 16 per cent., an eight-hour day in three shifts, and a lodging allowance of 4s. 6d. a month. That lodging allowance arises from the general old custom of living-in. Hitherto all the

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single men and single women had lived in barrack dormitories inside the mill, with a room for meals, gas, heating, and washing-troughs provided. These blocks of lodgings—"spalnya," as they are called—dismal and crowded as life in them must be, were perhaps as comfortable and much cheaper than the accommodation to be had outside. But they lacked the one great charm in life—the charm of liberty. At the time of the strike, the hands demanded the right of receiving friends and relations from outside into the premises. The managers complied, and that evening the whole place was crammed with enthusiastic advocates of family affection. A mass meeting, eloquent of revolution, was held in the mill yard, and the devotees of friendship paraded their red flags in front of the managers' quarters with trumpet and drum. Next day the managers withdrew their amiable concession, cleared the dormitories of men and women, and turned them neck and crop out into the road to fend for themselves. The lodging allowance was given to prevent further riots and to soothe the conscience. In the matter of money, it is no compensation for what the workmen lose, but liberty is thrown in, and liberty counts so high that I think the workers had the best of it in the end, and probably the old barracks will gradually disappear.

In the last twenty years the rate of pay has gone up fourfold, while the cost of living has

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only doubled. A good workman in this mill now received from 24s. to 30s. a week, which appeared to be the maximum wage, and since the strike a woman's wage had risen to 8s. a week, with the same lodging allowance as the men, or about 9s. 2d. a week in all. The standard of food was perhaps a little higher than in St. Petersburg, for, except during fasts, the family expected some sort of meat or stew every day. But this was a particularly rich mill; it prided itself on its high wages, and the Englishmen of its management delighted to display a paternal benevolence to the innocent unfortunates of a lower race. It was certainly remarkable that all the hands had gone back, except those who could not be summoned from their villages owing to the breakdown of the post.

Of course, the prolonged post strike, which had continued for nearly three weeks then, was inconvenient for everybody. Revolutions are generally inconvenient, especially for business people. But it was rather too much when that ancient champion of tyranny, the *Novoe Vremya*, took this opportunity for working itself up into such a glow of righteous indignation because the strikers were depriving mankind of humanity's glorious right—the right of communication and speech—the right of corresponding with fellow-men afar off, and calling on others to associate in their joys and griefs. What had the *Novoe Vremya* cared about

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that glorious right a few months before? What protest had it ever raised against a censorship that pried into letters, and chuckled over lovers' secrets, and tracked men down to death through the words of their friends? Or what communication with their fellow-men had been allowed to exiles and prisoners—exiles and prisoners who had been wiped out from human existence for exercising that glorious right of speech? In reading leading articles like that I have sometimes detected limits beyond which even hypocrisy ceases to be decent.

But in times of revolution we must expect and tolerate much wild absurdity among people who are afraid of losing their money, and among the startled cowards who have suddenly realized what revolution is. In a letter to his own paper, the *New Life*, about this time, Maxim Gorky said that people had been writing to him from all over Russia to ask why it was that the patient workman and the dear, gentle peasant, whom the advanced thinkers used to worship as a saint, had suddenly shown themselves so very disagreeable and dangerous. There was a crudity and innocence about the question which takes us back more than half a century in Western social history, and Gorky's own answer sounds to us almost as much a truism as a chapter of Charles Kingsley seems now. He merely repeated the weary old truth that in ordinary times the rich and governing classes have never taken the

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smallest notice of the worker and the peasant. When have they ever turned from their games of ambition or pleasure to consider the poor? In what way have they shared their life, except in the distribution of doles, which are given for their own comfort? If a bad time had now come for them, and if a worse was coming, that was only the natural turning of a wheel which had been slow to turn.

In our country we have long been familiar with such statements. We have long known that the rich man's charity is but a ransom for himself, so that he may follow enjoyment with undisturbed content. We have long known that the sympathies of comfortable people are limited by their own comfort. We have also learnt how vain it is to preach such truths, if preaching is to end in words. But what to us has become true to satiety may still be a bewildering paradox to less experienced and less sophisticated nations, and the extraordinary influence of writers like Gorky in Russia seems to arise from the simple-hearted earnestness with which thoughtful Russians have received their doctrine. What to us appears so painfully true that we had almost forgotten it, may dawn upon them as a fine paradox of revelation.

The teaching in Gorky's new play, *The Children of the Sun* would be rather less familiar to us, for it strikes at the intellectual classes, who generally

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regard themselves as above criticism, whereas the rich have become case-hardened to sermons and abuse. It was then being performed in his own theatre—the best theatre in the world, airy, admirably planned for hearing, entirely free from the curse of decoration, and provided with a large hall where the audience could discuss revolution during the welcome pauses which extend Russian entertainments through the night. The drama is Ibsenite—a humorous tragedy, with plenty of ironic laughter, though it fades away into a paltry German suicide. But the political point is that the central figure—an excellent man of science, simple, sweet tempered, and devoted with all his heart to the creation of life by chemical means—declares that intellectual people like himself are in reality toiling for the poor, no matter how indifferent they may appear to the poverty of others. They are the children of the sun—the almost divine beings who shed light in the darkness of the world. The simple-hearted chemist is himself a true saint of intellect. When, with the consent of his wife, a rich and lovely lady flings herself round his neck and offers him all her love and a complete laboratory, he accepts the laboratory with rapture, but asks if the love is not superfluous. Nevertheless all his innocence, his devotion, and his real kindliness of heart do not help him in the least when the peasants, infuriated for liberty, come storming down the village and almost choke the

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life out of that Child of the Sun in his own back garden.

That was likely to be the fate of many excellent people, who were pursuing culture without extravagance. Many who deserved no worse than the rest of us poor intellectual and decently clothed men were caught up in the whirling skirts of revolution and carried shrieking they knew not where. From every side came rumours of burnings and slaughters. The country was spoken of as a wilderness of destruction, into which none dared penetrate. For many days in vain I sought for a guide and interpreter to accompany me among the peasants. To enter a village was sudden death, and not for three pounds a day would a townsman go with me, till at last I found one whose poverty consented.

In Moscow itself we were still revelling in liberty. We lived under an anarchy almost fit for the angels, who by their divine nature are a law unto themselves. But, unhappily, as I said, our liberty was tempered by assassination. For some weeks the average of street murders was one a day. Barefooted, long-haired beggars, the very heroes of Gorky's tales, the ragged supermen of misery, sprang out from dark corners, and I always thanked them heartily for their mistake in regarding my money as more valuable than my life. People walked warily, and kept one eye behind them, turning sharply round if they heard even the padding sound of goloshes in the

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snow. Often at night, as I went up and down the rampart of the Kremlin, and watched those ancient white temples with their brazen domes glittering under the moon, I noticed that the few passers-by skirted round me in a kind of arc, and if they came upon me suddenly they ran. My intentions were far from murderous, but all were living in that haggard element of fear. They had not yet realized that the only decent way to live is to take life in one hand and possessions in the other, and both hands open.

CHAPTER VII

THE OLD ORDER

ST. NICHOLAS' DAY of December 19th had long been awaited with expectation, both of triumph and fear. It was the Tsar's christening day—one of the four festivals which were given to St. Nicholas every year, because, on his way to see Christ, he stopped to help a peasant's cart out of the mud and made his clothes all dirty. It had been rumoured with confidence that the work of the great Manifesto would then be completed—that the Tsar himself would come to Moscow, and from the very shrine of the Empire issue the charter of a free Constitution, and, like a generous father, distribute the Crown lands among the peasants. It was a splendid opportunity for heroic concession—such concession as would have gathered nearly the whole mass of the people round its author in enthusiastic devotion. But there was nothing heroic about the poor little Tsar—"Homunculus," as the satirists called him—and the mood of concession had passed away. It was a time of reaction now, the imprisonment of labour leaders,

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the arrest of editors, the closure of meetings, the incitement to murder.

For a week past the day had been looked forward to with terror by most Progressives, and especially by the Jews. Christians had been preparing for themselves large crosses of wood, iron, or even cardboard, which they hung round their necks, so that when the religious mob attacked them, they might fling open their furs and reveal their Christianity visible upon their waistcoats.

But the children of darkness were a-tiptoe for the slaughter. Only the day before the festival, the patriotic organization of the Black Hundred, called the Hooligans or the Order of the Men of Russia according to sympathy, had issued a manifesto inciting to the final extermination of all Jews and foreigners in the city. Their common duty to God and the Tsar commanded all true men to unite in clearing Holy Russia of the accursed stranger. At the same time, the more moderate of the priesthood, mindful of an accepted distinction between religion and murder, wrote a letter to the papers, appealing to the faithful to act like Christians and not to kill the Jews. But such advice was a mere bewilderment to the simple man. To kill Jews is to act like Christians. Why complicate matters by raising the doubt? Ages of history had proved it.

So the Jews and many of the foreigners fortified their houses and hid themselves. All Moscow,

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indeed, was fortified in a manner, for new shutters and hoardings now protected doors and windows of all shops and many houses which were left open before. In the evening I went through the streets, and all was gloom and silence and fear. In one place on the Boulevard a slightly drunken soldier, who had been boasting of his revolutionary convictions, was surrounded by a little knot of loyalists, beguiled down a side court, and quietly slaughtered. At the door of a little restaurant in my own street I found a shouting mob. They had set upon a student and beaten him senseless. The restaurant people had dragged his body, almost naked, into the house and laid it across two chairs in a cellar. Through holes in the shutter you could see it lying there, in a shirt that oozed blood, while a girl student, who had been with him, knelt with her arms round his neck and cried aloud. At the sound of her crying, the mob yelled with exultation, and fought for a place at the shutter.

Morning came, intensely cold, but clear and bright. Before nine o'clock large crowds had begun to gather on the Kremlin—that triangular citadel of old cathedrals and palaces in the centre of Moscow, surrounded by an ancient crenellated wall, looking steeply down over the river on the south side. The priesthood had asked leave for a special ceremony of prayer on account of Russia's troubles, and the new Governor-General, Admiral

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Dubássoff, who had arrived only two days before, could not decently refuse a prayer meeting to the patriotic ministers of peace, especially at a time when the Government was only longing for disturbances as an excuse for military assassination.

The prayer meeting was fixed for the great open space called the Red or Splendid Square (Krasnaya) lying between the Kremlin proper and the Old Town, which is surrounded by a similar wall. But the church services for the saint's day had first to be held in the cathedrals, and by ten o'clock the sacred banners from all the great shrines of Moscow began to assemble on the height where the three cathedrals, the bell tower, and the great palace stand. A sacred banner is a metal plate, generally about three feet square, hanging out sideways from a pole like a flag, except that it is quite stiff. The people like to think of it as gold, but that would not prevent it being brass. The plate itself is fretted in various designs, and at the centre is an icon, a representation of some saint or religious scene—St. George with his dragon, the Resurrection, or the Ascension—sometimes painted on board, sometimes worked in silver and other metals. The banner is further adorned with rich enamels, and rattles a fringe of metal tassels. I counted nearly a hundred of them glittering in the frosty sun, as they entered the Kremlin gates in groups and passed the piled-up lines of guns

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which Napoleon left behind him, and the new white palings round the little shrine where the Grand Duke Sergius met his end.

It was impossible to estimate the number of people who swarmed on every open space and crowded the steps of all the churches. There were many thousands, and all were bowing and crossing themselves or kneeling in the snow with adoration before every shrine and at every saint that passed. All classes were there, and sometimes a lady, deep in furs, would signal to her servant to put down a cushion or piece of mackintosh on the particular spot where she wished to worship. But, as is natural in a religious ceremony, on the whole it was a crowd of the poor. Many peasants had come in from the country, conspicuous for their wild hair and leather coats. But the greater part were simply the poor of Moscow—the pious, the patriotic, the criminal poor—all who are the natural enemies of change. They went from shrine to shrine, they crowded round the Great Bell, they climbed the brass-domed tower for the view, they filled the cathedrals till it was impossible to stir inside, and from the outside we could only listen to the deep chantings that boomed through the open doors. And all the time the crossings and bowings and prostrations in the snow never ceased.

The Governor-General and other great officials and soldiers had a specially short service, in

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accordance with their dignity, in some chapel up the Lion staircase, where no unhallowed or ununiformed foot is fit to tread. But by eleven all the services were over, and with infinite effort the holy banners were drawn up in two lines beside the Great Bell. Their main poles being supported by four smaller poles, they began to move slowly and with difficulty towards the gate into the Red Square. It is the Holy Gate of the Saviour, under which every Russian takes off his cap, so sacred for centuries has been the picture above the arch.

Small bodies of Cossacks, and of infantry with fixed bayonets, were stationed along the route or accompanied the procession, to protect the heavenly powers. When at last the glittering banners had staggered by, there came a group of priests in robes stiff with gold and many-coloured embroideries, thrown over their ordinary fur coats, and helping to make them warm as well as beautiful. And behind them came a party of earthly saints in apparel still more marvellous. I think they were bishops, but they may have been archimandrites. They wore hats of brass or gold, shaped like Byzantine domes, and sprinkled with gleaming glass or precious stones. Some of the saints had hair hanging far down their chests and backs; others were less devout in shagginess.

Last of all, supported by an extra strong detachment of Cossacks, came the banners of the most

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sacred shrine in Moscow, accompanying the picture of the Iberian Virgin herself, which had been brought out for the occasion in its wooden case from its own rich chapel at the Iberian gate. As she passed—this famous virgin, copied from the Virgin of Mount Athos centuries ago—the crowds on each side bowed before her like corn when the wind blows.

So the procession moved under the Gate of the Saviour, and gathered on the round stone platform where Ivan the Cruel used to enjoy the executions. It stands in front of Ivan's many-coloured church, built by the Italian whose eyes (as the old myth says) were put out that he might never design another so gay. The service of special prayer was there performed, and as the clocks struck twelve and the guns began to fire a salute, the religious part of the day came to an end. The banners went back into the Kremlin; the Iberian Virgin was carried in a four-wheeler to her shrine; the bishops and archimandrites drove away to lunch in huge coaches drawn by four black horses abreast.

Then the moment came which all had awaited—the moment for which the prayers to God had only been the excuse. Now or never was the time for slaughter and enrichment. A fervid orator sprang on the balustrade of the stone platform, and with athletic gesticulations and rousing appeals to heaven and the Tsar, strove to lash the crowd to the proposed heat of fury. Other patriots were busy extolling the beauty

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of domestic virtue, and distributing photographs of the Tsar with his baby-boy upon his knee. The people cheered and shouted, and began to rush up and down, like caged wolves just before feeding-time. Then raising the Russian hymn, the orator, still threatening the bright infinity of space with his fists, set off to march up the whole length of the square. The crowd swarmed after him, thousands strong. They trickled through the two little arches of the Iberian gate, and gathering together again, swept in one great tide up the main street called the Tverskaya.

They were going to slaughter the Jews, and exterminate the students, and purify the city. No end to the horrors they were going to perform. But they reached the square in front of the Government House, and there they stopped to make speeches, calling again upon heaven and the Tsar, and urging the Governor-General to take vengeance upon all revolutionaries and other enemies of the country.

The Governor-General appeared in uniform upon the balcony—tall and pale, white haired, with long white moustache, and a narrow, pointed beard. It was Admiral Dubásoff, hitherto only known as Russia's representative in the inquiry about the Baltic Fleet's victory off Hull; afterwards to be better known as the Butcher or the Admiral of the Street. In a loud voice he addressed the crowd, telling them how delighted he was to see so

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many Russian citizens still on the Tsar's side, and promising to telegraph to the Tsar with what confidence his Majesty could rely upon the unshaken loyalty and unflinching courage of ancient Moscow.

It was a little unfortunate that just at that moment, before the cheers could even begin, some one at the corner of the square near me raised the cry, "The students are coming! The students! The students!" Like a wind, terror swept over the crowd, the sledges dashed away in flight, and, plunging, falling, and crashing into each other, the people rushed down any street and hid round any corner for their lives. I have seen many fine panics, from the Greek war downwards, but never anything quite so ludicrous as that stampede of bloody-minded patriots. For nothing whatever had happened, and when at last the terrified loyalists took heart to look behind them, they saw the square peaceful, silent, and almost empty. One by one they crept back into courage. They even tried to rekindle their patriotic zeal and resume their murderous aspect. But it was no good. The Governor-General had gone indoors to dispatch his telegram in praise of their courage. That unhappy run had spoilt the whole massacre, and gradually the orators ceased to rage, and every one went home for dinner.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DAYS OF MOSCOW—I

NEXT day (December 20th), I had determined to start for the Caucasus, because very severe fighting was reported there, and it was said, I believe truly, that in some places the Georgians had set up an independent government of their own. Accordingly I sledged to the station, took my ticket, and registered my luggage to Baku by Rostoff-on-Don, occupied my place in the heated train, hung up my fur coat and snow boots, and prepared to endure the full blast of a Russian carriage for the four days and nights of the journey. As is the way in Russia, the train filled up nearly an hour before it was time to start, and we all sat contemplating each other and wondering what our manners would be like on the way. There were a large number of peasants and country people in the train, packed together into family sections with their children, and baskets, and bedding. Next to me sat a cleanly old man and his wife, who held their goods upon their knees with a sturdy resignation, as much as to say, "Now let Heaven do its worst."

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So we waited, and taking out a book I was far away in the city of the "Lys Rouge" upon the Arno, when I became dimly conscious of a feeling of uneasiness in the carriages, as when a motor breaks down and the City men fret. Doors were opened and heads put out, and footsteps passed up and down the corridor. Distant shouting and questions were heard. The man opposite me packed up his lunch and went out. I followed, and saw a party of railway men just uncoupling the engine, which puffed away for twenty yards and then stood still. With a long diminishing hiss, the steam of the heating apparatus rushed out from the pipes and left the train to grow cold, like the dead.

"Strike?" I said, going up to the workmen. "Yes, general strike at twelve o'clock," they answered, and I gathered up my book and coat. The rest of my luggage could not be recovered then, and next night it went wandering down the line upon the train, and was no more seen. For Christmas was coming, and many trains that were wandering upon the road supplied seasonable gifts for the peasants' needs. Hundreds of nice geese and ducks they gave them, loads of vegetables, barrels of sugar. For miles beyond the city, the railway was like an enormous Christmas hamper, full of good cheer, and many a starving peasant recognized for the first time the true significance of the holy festival.

As to the cleanly old man and woman, they sat

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there still, clutching their goods. It seemed that nothing short of the Last Trumpet could induce them to stir. They had taken their tickets, and their confidence in railways was unshaken. They looked at me with the sympathetic tolerance we show to a crank who questions gravitation or maintains the earth is flat. The peasants in like manner sat still and cherished their young. It seemed incredible they should not go after they had taken all that trouble to get started for home, and had settled down into their lairs in the nice warm train. I left them still seated there, amid expostulations growing shrill. But in the next fortnight I had to return many times to the station, and day after day I found them encamped in the waiting-rooms, one family living on a table by day and under it at night, another resolutely holding a leather bench, and two or three nested behind the bar. To keep them alive, the railway issued a dole of about a shilling a day for the grown-ups, and they cooked their tea and bits of food at the stoves or inside the locomotives. But it was not a happy way of spending life. Children sprawled and fought and wailed; mothers tried in vain to wash and clean; men tripped over girls asleep upon the boards. And it was worse when, a few days later, scores of soldiers dribbled in somehow from the war, unwashed, bewildered, and wretched, and were thrown into the station among the peasants, to live there as best they

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could. The smell of men's tents in the morning in war time is not pleasant, but it is Arabia compared to those waiting-rooms.

When I got back that Wednesday from the station to the middle of the city, I found the general strike already proclaimed. All the banks were shut and barricaded. If any shops were still open, parties of strikers or revolutionists went into them and compelled the owners to put the shutters up. The schools were closed, the work-people walked out of the mills, clerks left their offices, and several hundred thousand men and women were turned loose into the streets with nothing to do. Such gas as was in the retorts was allowed to burn itself out, but electricity was cut off at once, both for light and for the trams, and so was the water for a time. People began to store it in baths and pails ; they even searched the roofs for clean snow and melted it down ; but next day the water supply was restored on the ground that it was essential for the existence of the poor. Bread was essential too, and a few bakeries were allowed to keep working ; but even that afternoon women were standing in line outside the bakers' shops, and in the following days they began to gather there long before dawn. In the hotels, and I suppose in most well-to-do homes, bread sank from white to grey, vegetables disappeared, the price of meat doubled, unknown portions of animals were seen, beer ceased to flow,

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and the suffering rich almost learnt how the poor die daily.

I went up the Tverskaya, already mentioned as the chief radius of Moscow for shops and cafés. It was full of wandering and uncertain crowds. Where the circle of Boulevards crosses it by the Strastnoi convent, I found a troop of horse drawn up in front of the poet Pushkin's statue. They were facing a thick and excited crowd, from the midst of which a white-faced orator came forward and, standing at the very nose of the officer's charger, addressed him with impassioned harangues, imploring him to abandon the cause of tyranny, and no longer to trample over the corpses of his fellow-countrymen. The officer listened with genial politeness, and sometimes even answered an argument or raised some objection with a smile. His pleasing manners encouraged hope. The women of the crowd began to say nice things to him, and all through Russian life there is a familiarity among the classes which we have never reached. A friendly sympathy pervaded the air. Could it be possible that the troops would "fraternize"? Ah, how often revolutionists in all countries had told me the troops would fraternize!

But the officer gave an order, and the detachment wheeled off, two deep, down the Boulevard to their barracks, the crowd clapping their hands, the women waving their scarves and blowing kisses to

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them in cheerful mockery as they went. Two were left behind, waiting for a third whose horse they held, and on them the orator now turned his eloquence, while the rest laughed and cheered, and tried to pat their horses. But they were only two common peasants with broad, red faces, and had no pretty answers to make.

They only sat there looking straight before them while the taunts grew louder and the people began to crush threateningly upon them. I was close at their side and could see their fists doubled tightly round the loaded whips on their saddles. But at that moment their comrade came back, and all three galloped after the others amid a storm of derision and angry cries.

Hardly had they gone when from a tea-house opposite three red flags on poles emerged and were marched into the square. Uncertain what to do next, the boys who were carrying them started down the Tverskaya, and the crowd followed in a dense mass, shouting the "Marseillaise." They reached the open space in front of the Governor-General's house where the loyalists had held their panic the day before. But hardly had they passed the porch, when a squadron of Cossacks swept into the crowd behind from a side street at right angles and pursued the red flags at full gallop, whirling their nagaikas and riding down all before them. The procession scattered like leaves. The

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squadron divided, part charging down the main street, and part across the square. In a few seconds nothing remained upon that open space but some men and girls stretched upon the snow, and the three long strips of red cotton which lay as the emblems of freedom before the Governor-General's door. The police carried off the wounded to the cells ; an infantry battalion was brought out to line the square, and many days were to pass before I could cross it again.

That night, all the main streets stood in absolute darkness, only the narrow side-streets being lit with a glimmer of gas. No sledges ran. Here and there a beggar shuffled out upon me from his lurking-place, or a figure visible for a moment disappeared silently. No women walked ; on them too the strike had fallen. Houses and churches stood black and lifeless, like an abandoned city which time had not yet ruined.

The next day was ominously quiet ; no business was done ; no newspapers were published ; people kept indoors ; even the restaurants and provision shops were shut, and in the Hotel Métropole the music ceased. Instead of that melancholy orchestra, a battery of eight guns lay hidden there now ; the guests were turned out, and it was said the Governor-General himself had made the hotel his head-quarters. Others had seen him take refuge in the sacred enclosure of the Kremlin,

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where the ancient gates were all shut and guarded. Even in the Old Town they brought planks and beams, and nailed up nearly all the gates. Troops were posted at the Nicolai or St. Petersburg station and the line kept open for the arrival of reinforcements. The engines were worked by soldiers and the whole length of the road watched by pickets who were provisioned from the trains. The Government dared not trust the ordinary Moscow garrison, but if outside troops could only be spared from the other capital, all might be well.

A large meeting of the strikers assembled at the Aumont or Aquarium and called upon the revolutionary bands or "militia" (*drouzchina*) to begin. They pointed to the shameless reaction of the past two weeks, to the imprisonment of the labour leaders in St. Petersburg, the arrest of all Progressive editors, the refusal of the Tsar to make the expected concessions on his name-day. He had made no concessions, he had only sought to buy the loyalty of the troops by promises of better food. It was evident that the Government was forcing civil war upon the people, and unless the revolutionists would act at once, the workmen would throw up the game, go back to their work, and abandon all hope of change for ever.

The revolutionists hesitated. They were not ready—they would not be ready till February—not really ready till April. They were ill-armed, had

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only eighty rifles as yet ; a good many revolvers certainly, but not enough bombs. Besides, if the Government wanted a rising, they obviously ought not to rise. It is a bad strategist who lets the enemy dictate the time for battle. The strike had been proclaimed in St. Petersburg, certainly, but the leaders were all in prison, and already it was seen to be a very half-hearted affair. Both the strike and revolutionary action should be simultaneous in all the large cities, if the great end was to be won. Christmas was near, and all the work-people liked to save up a little money for the festival. Every one bought a bottle of vodka, if nothing else. The peasants would be turned against the revolution if the railway remained blocked over Christmastide, and they could not sell their produce. Already threats had come in from the country, prophesying horrible deaths for the railway men unless the strike ended at once. There was just time to appease the peasants now, for the Russian Christmas Day was still sixteen days ahead. So they hesitated, appealing for delay and a better opportunity.

But the Government had determined that neither delay nor opportunity should be given. Their one thought was the urgent need of money. The power that commands force is the Government, and the power that commands money can command force ; that was their just and simple argument. Their one hope was to stir up an ill-prepared rebellion, to

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crush it down, and stand triumphant before the nations of Europe, confidently inviting new loans in the name of law and order, so as to pay the interest on the old and "maintain the value of the rouble." For this object it was essential that people should be killed in large numbers. The death of every Progressive went to establish the credit of the Treasury, and unless the slaughter came quickly, the officials could not count upon their pay. The only alternative was national bankruptcy in the face of the world, and no more hope of pleasant loans again. So troops and police were stationed round the Aquarium meeting and met the crowd as it came out with showers of blows from clubs and whips. At all costs the people must be goaded into violence, or the Government's strategy would have failed.

The final stroke was given the next day (Friday, December 22nd) and it proved entirely successful. It was evening, and a body of some two hundred of the revolutionary bands, including several women, was gathered in a flat belonging to a leader named Fiedler, I think a lawyer. He lived in the top floor of a tall white house, just opposite the British Consulate, and not far from the post office.

The place had long been watched by spies. About ten o'clock, as the bands were debating war and peace, a knock came at the door and a summons

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to surrender. They looked out of the window, and the street below was full of dark forms with gleams of steel. So it had begun in earnest at last ! “And there shall be no drawing back,” thought one of their number, and seizing up a small bomb from the table, he threw it with all his might among the dark figures below. It burst with a flash that revealed the waiting troops, and an officer rolled in the dirt, never to be loved by women again. Two men also were wounded. Some said two officers were killed ; some said twenty, and hundreds of men. But to have been in a town where men are really killed sheds a reflected glory, and the more numerous the dead, the finer the reputation of survivors.

The flash of that bomb was a signal for war. The enemy was ready. They had made their preparations for the event, and answered bomb by bomb. While the meeting was breaking up in confusion, rushing from room to room, some peering into the street, some fighting their way downstairs, a shell came whizzing through the corner window and burst against the opposite wall. From the description and the hole it made, I think it was a segment or percussion shell, but it was followed rapidly by case-shot, and at so short a range it is possible that nothing but case shot was used. For the guns had been placed in a main street, at not much more than fifty yards' distance,

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and commanded an uninterrupted sight of the whole top story. At once the fatal disadvantage of the revolutionists was seen. Probably there was not a man among them who could have thrown a bomb fifty yards clear ; but to the Government's guns it was a childish range even for case-shot, and without cause for pride they could throw shrapnel and percussion bombs up to four thousand yards two or three times a minute.

The bombardment of the house continued for about half an hour, the shells crashing through the windows and against the brickwork, but not doing very much damage except to furniture and glass, for most of the revolutionists were crowded together on the staircase, and many were escaping through backyards and over walls. A few, however, with great gallantry remained and kept up a revolver-fire from the windows to cover the retreat of the others. Four or five of them were killed by shell-fire, and fifteen were badly wounded. It was said next day that Fiedler was among the killed, and I was told how he had stood outside a window in defiance and been blown to pieces. I was even shown bits of his coat and trousers still sticking to the window-frame ; but I was not quite convinced, especially when I heard of his being shot in gaol a fortnight later. In such cases it is hardly ever possible to discover the truth from either side. Even eye-witnesses are generally too excited or too



FIEDLER'S HOUSE.



EFFECT OF SHELLS.

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terrified to see, and the Russian Government lives upon the lie.

Towards midnight, a hundred and twenty revolutionists, including ten girls, surrendered. A high official told me next day that the girls had been released, but it is not thus that the Government treats girls, and I know now that he was lying or repeating a lie. As to the rest, he admitted they would be shot, because the prisons were already too full to hold them. The loss of over a hundred was a very serious thing for the party of progress. All manner of estimates of the revolutionary fighting strength have been made. Some of the best authorities said they refused to put it over 15,000 men. A very careful onlooker, who certainly had special opportunities of knowing, fixed on 1,500 as the just figure. The revolutionists themselves maintained, and still maintain, that only 500 were engaged on the barricades. In that case, they had lost a sixth part of their force at the first stroke, and they could not afford to lose a man. For myself, I believe no estimate of numbers in war-time, unless given by the man who issues rations—and to the revolutionists no one issued rations. But to me it is utterly incredible that only 500 were opposed to the Government troops during the following nine days. Five hundred is only half a battalion, and every colonel knows how tiny a handful even a full battalion is when it comes into

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action. They may mean that only 500 were adequately armed, but in that case the estimate is too high. The revolutionists were said to have possessed two or three machine-guns, though I never saw them or heard them, and attribute the rumour to the identity of the word for machine-gun and repeating rifle (*Pulemet*). But by their own admission they had only eighty rifles, with very few cartridges, and the remainder were armed with various kinds of revolver, especially the so-called "Brownings" of Belgian make. They are good enough weapons, and will kill at a hundred yards if they hit at all. But few revolvers can be depended on over twenty yards, and I have never found them much good, except as a moral influence, or for the re-assuring comfort of suicide *in extremis*.

Five hundred could not have done the work. That night the face of a third of Moscow was changed. The morning brought rumours of an assault on the Nicolai station with the loss of 200 men ; of assaults on the Government house and the Prefecture of police ; but, worse than all, of a serious rising in some cotton and lace mills south of the city, and the probable danger of several English overseers and their families. Driving out early in a sledge to the beginning of the open country, near the place on the river where the Russian people once built a house for their painter Verestchagin, I found a few families of Lancastrians

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and Nottingham men, anxious and apprehensive indeed but not surrounded by bloodthirsty mobs as we had heard. The hands on strike had been marching with red flags up and down the road as usual the day before and singing the "Marseillaise," when they were set upon in front and rear by Dragoons and Cossacks with the usual results. Now they were hanging about their factories or living-barracks, indignant and dangerous with the sense of wrong, but outwardly quiet, and only cursing and threatening us with fists and stones as we went about among them. Not that the English overseers were hated. In themselves they were popular, but as the rulers and the best-paid workmen, with separate houses of their own, they were marked as the representatives of overwhelming capitalism.

As I looked out over the silent mills to the open country and wretched villages beyond, the sound of a big gun suddenly came from Moscow. Turning round, I saw the great city glittering with domes and crosses, distinct with towers and lines of brilliant light under the frosty sun, while all the church bells were booming and tinkling for the vigil of some feast. Again came the sound of a gun, and then again, and I had known from the first there was no mistaking it. I had not then heard of the attack on Fiedler's house, for one of the peculiarities of Russian life is that the Last Judgment might be in

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progress in one street while, unaware of your danger, you continued increasing your record of sins in the next. But now there could be doubt no longer ; the open war had begun.

In half an hour I was crossing the bridge and climbing the Kremlin hill to the Red Square. Crowds of well-dressed people, clerks, and shop-boys were hurrying past me away from the city. In spite of the strike, they had walked in by habit that morning, or merely to see what was going on. But guns in the street were a breach of business habits, and now they had seen enough and preferred to lunch at home. Similarly, I think, Brixton would be unusually full at midday if the shells were bursting in Cheapside ; and it was in the Cheapside of Moscow that the guns were then at work.

If we may take Moscow as a circle with the Kremlin for centre, it was on the north-west segment of the circle that the revolutionists made their most serious attack. Certainly, there were other attacks as well—two on the St. Petersburg station, against which the whole effort of the rising ought to have been concentrated ; and one attack was made on the Rezan station close by. The rumour came in every morning for the next week that both had been burnt to the ground, though when I visited them, I always found them untouched. Other attacks were also made, and there was a certain amount of fighting on the south side of the wandering little river. But the

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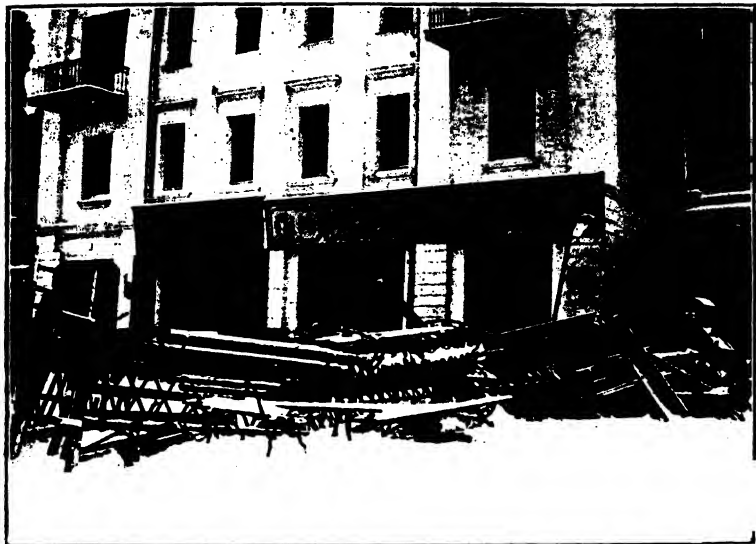
main interest lay in that north-west segment, of which the Tverskaya, the Dmitrovka, and Petrovka are the main radii, while the Boulevards enclosing the "White Town" form the nearer of the two concentric arcs, and the Sadovaya, or garden circle, the further. The Sadovaya, which runs round the whole city, was a real circumference or boundary to the fighting area during the first few days, and if one started from the red triumphal arch near the Nicolai station, and followed the arc westward and south till the river was reached, the whole scene of action would be included in that segment. But concentric circles make the most puzzling plan on which a town can be built, because it is difficult in walking to allow for the almost imperceptible curves. Only in Moscow and Monastir have I seen such arrangements of streets, and only in those two towns have I ever hesitated about my way.

The revolutionists had chosen this segment for attack because it contained the Government house, the Prefecture of Police, the great Central Prison, from which the exiles used to start for Siberia, and at least three important barracks. As far as they had any definite plan at all, their idea seems to have been to drive a kind of wedge into the heart of the city, supporting the advance by barricades on each side, so as to hamper the approach of troops. The point of the wedge was to be driven down the Tverskaya as far as the Government house, and if once that

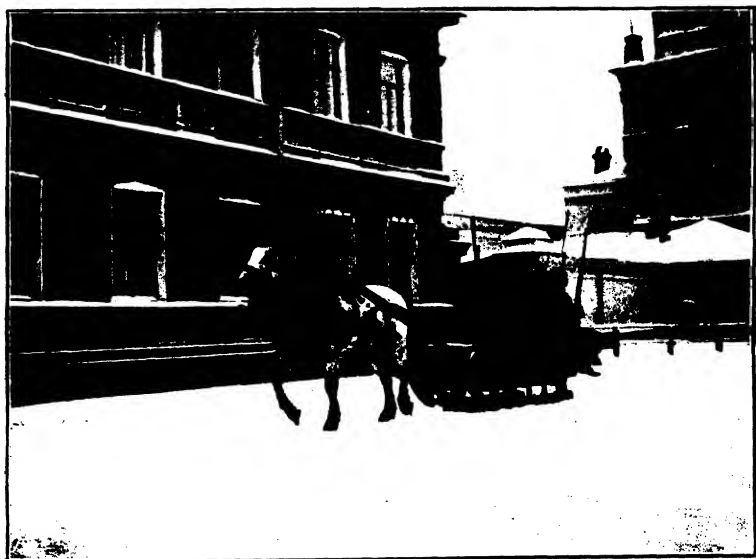
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position had been gained, they probably hoped that the rest would be easy. Accordingly, during the night they had thrown up barricades across all streets leading into the Tverskaya beyond the circle of the Boulevards, and in all streets parallel to it. By morning the point of the wedge had nearly reached the open space where the Boulevard runs and the Pushkin statue confronts the Strasnoi Convent.

That was the main and serious line of attack, as the revolutionists designed it. But at the time it was hard to understand their purpose, for in street fighting one can get no view, the firing comes from many sides at once, and you are open to equal danger from friend or foe. There is no front or rear, and you feel you are nothing but flanks. To every point of the compass you are exposed ; there is no obvious line of advance, for the enemy may always be behind you. And there is no line of retreat, for at any moment your communications with your base may be cut, and you may be shot at for hours from street to street before you can get home for food or sleep. But the greatest difficulty in grasping the situation at once arose from the mere numbers of the barricades which had been already thrown up since the previous night. Over a large part of the district barricades had grown up quite at random. They appeared in every lane. Miniature barricades crossed the footpaths on the Boulevard



A MINOR BARRICADE.



A MILITARY POST AT MOSCOW.

The Days of Moscow—I

gardens. They were especially thick in the Tsvietnoi, or Flower Boulevard, and often so flimsy that a push would knock them over. As signs of spiritual grace, nothing could have been nobler, for they were the work of high-hearted young men and girls, who, having read that barricades are the proper things in revolution, hastened to build them anywhere and anyhow. Tubs, shutters, gates, iron railings, telegraph poles, and front doors were hurriedly piled across a street or path, and left standing there as a menace to tyrants. So they were a menace to tyrants. Every bandbox there proved the deep-rooted hatred to tyranny. But not one of them would stop a bullet, and there was no possibility or intention of defending them for a moment. They were the work of splendid children learning to make war, and when at last they were torn up and burnt, one passed over their smouldering ruins with the regret we feel for broken toys.

The very multitude of these barricades (early next morning I counted one hundred and thirty of them, and I had not seen nearly half) made it difficult to understand the main purpose of all the fighting, when I found myself suddenly plunged into the middle of it that first afternoon. Alone, and very ignorant both of the language and the town, I could not at first discover any design on either side, beyond setting up barricades and knocking them down again. It seemed as if the

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Government might have left the revolutionists alone, and simply issued a proclamation to the citizens of Moscow: "Keep your streets blocked up if you like. We should have thought it inconvenient, but it really makes no difference to us." Like most other people, I had no experience of street fighting to guide me, and it was with this sense of uncertainty and bewilderment that I made my way from point to point towards the part of the Tverskaya from which the sound of guns came. To get into the main street itself was impossible, for every approach was guarded by sentries, who cried "Halt!" and then fired with inconsiderate rapidity. To the crowds of peaceful citizens, such behaviour was novel and pleasantly exciting. They gathered in thick groups behind the shelter of any street corner, or up the passages, and even in the porches of big shops and banks. Every now and then some one would snatch off his cap and dash across an exposed street as though he were finishing for a hundred yards. The crowd held their breaths and watched eagerly, hoping to see him fall, as an audience hopes to see the tight-rope girl break her neck. But when he reached safety and waved his arms, they cheered and another started.

By similar means, except that national vanity made me walk instead of running, I reached the Petrovka (the Lombard-street of Moscow, parallel

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to the Tverskaya, and below it down a hill), and made my way along it till I came to the Boulevard near the Trouba where the Ermitage restaurant stands. Looking up to the left I could there see the Pushkin statue, and watch the flash of the guns in position on the high open space that commands the cross roads of the Tverskaya and the Boulevard in both directions. Up the hill the Boulevard was quite empty, but in the hollow at the foot a few people were hurrying to and fro. Some were model citizens, who would rather die than break through the habits of every day ; some were women who had to provide the Sunday dinner anyhow. But most were possessed by the curious instinct which drives even the gentlest men and women to witness fighting and death against their will.

Hoping to discover the true position of the revolutionists, I started to cross the Boulevard myself, keeping under cover of the snowy trees whenever I could. In the middle I saw a girl coming towards me—an ordinary workgirl with a shawl over her head. Apparently she also had come for curiosity, for all her rosy face was smiling with excitement. But as I looked at it, a little red splash fell upon her cheek, and instantly the side of her neck and the knot of the shawl turned red. She stood still, drew in her breath with a gasp, and then sat down in the snow crying. I jammed my

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handkerchief against the wound, but the bullet had only just touched her as it fell, and seeing there was no hole in the face I signalled to her to run, and away she went into the Petrovka, screaming for a sledge.

Going on, I had to leave the trees and cross the open road. At the entrance to a yard there, I found a small group of people leaning over another woman, who had just been hit and was lying helpless on the pavement, her eyes white and her breath coming and going heavily. She was a well-dressed girl in a long fur coat, possibly a revolutionist, but more likely a sympathetic spectator. The bullet had struck through her skirts, and a man was trying to stop the terrible bleeding by twisting two handkerchiefs round the leg. We carried her unconscious to a large house about a hundred yards up the hill, where a red-cross flag was flying. It may have been a permanent hospital, for the ambulance stations, afterwards organized by the Zemstvo or Town Council, were not ready then. The soldiers did not fire at us, though we had come into close range. All through those early days of the fighting, the red cross was respected, and people who were carrying the wounded, even without the ambulance badges, were not often fired at. A change came later on, and even to red-cross girls no mercy was shown. This change was due to a special order from Admiral Dubasoff.

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When I turned from the hospital door, I found my position excellent but uncomfortable. The protection of the wounded had brought me safely up close to the very centre of the situation ; but now that protection was withdrawn. I could not stand still, and to go back meant a long retirement down the open road fully exposed to fire from end to end. The only chance was to go on, and as the entrance to the next street was only about fifty yards away, I gathered up my fur coat and ran for it. Turning sharply round the corner, I found myself in the Mala Dmitrovka, a wide street down which the electric trams run in quiet times. It looked painfully open and empty. Lamp-posts had been knocked down and laid across the road, telegraph wires had been cut and strewn on the pavement or tied into entanglements, and the overhead strands for electricity hung in festoons, threatening the heads of horsemen. I saw at once that I had reached the zone between the contending forces, an admirable position for the military student, but otherwise unpleasing. Still, if I could only go on, I should discover the main revolutionary body, and that was my object. So keeping close to the houses on the left side, I started along the road at a trot. Only one other creature was in sight—a man of the bank-clerk type, who was walking rapidly in front of me, crouching down to protect his head. Once he looked behind to see if I were dangerous, and

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I was rapidly gaining on him when, all of a sudden, he sank together and lay down on the pavement.

Before I could reach him, he was up again and was leaning against a house, trying to take cover behind a down-spout. He could only speak Russian, but he pointed to his thigh, and I saw the blood running out over his boot and beginning to soak through the trouser-leg. I looked round for help, but the blinds in all the houses were down, and the gates barred and padlocked. Pointing in the direction by which we had come, I made him understand there was an ambulance near, and putting one arm round my neck, he began to hop back along the street down which we had advanced so fast. Neither of us was now in the least anxious about danger, and we listened to the guns and rifles with entire indifference. But the pain of the movement and the loss of blood were overcoming him ; he was turning green, and at last I was obliged to rest him on a doorstep. I tried binding his leg over the trouser, but that did not stop the flow, and the cold was so intense that I did not like to take his trousers off. He was falling into unconsciousness, and I tried in vain to make him crawl a few steps further. Again I looked round at the houses, and this time I saw some faces watching me from a window. I waved to them, and presently the front door opened, and three men and a girl came out, bringing a chair. On



"GOD WITH US!"

From *Sprut*.

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that we soon carried him down the road to the Red Cross room, and I was left standing outside the entrance again. I then discovered that from first to last we had been exposed to sharpshooters posted on the tower of the Strastnoi Convent, close by, and all running and cover had been useless.

But it was now getting dark. Under the protection of the wounded, I had approached nearer the revolutionary position than I thought possible at starting, and for once virtue had been something better than her own reward. To have put her to the test again would have been wanton, for one cannot count on always finding an object of protective philanthropy. So I made for the trees, and walking down the Boulevard through the deepening twilight, I ran straight into a half-battery of four guns that was coming up to the relief of the guns beside the statue. The scouts, who were thrown out over the space, seized me and searched me down, but raised no further objection to my existence.

That night I had an engagement in the west of the city, but the streets between were so carefully guarded that I had to creep in the dark through the Old Town and round by the Kremlin along the deserted river bank to get there, and then it was impossible to come back, for a minor state of siege had been declared, and the soldiers were shooting at anything that moved. A "minor state of siege"

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only implies that if you lose your life, or anything else during the time, you have no claim on the Government for compensation. It is a convenient arrangement for a bankrupt Government engaged in re-establishing its credit by the slaughter of its own people.

CHAPTER IX

THE DAYS OF MOSCOW—II

THE next day was our Christmas Eve—a Sunday. I had stayed the night, as I said, in the west of the disturbed district, and in the early morning some revolutionists came into the house, and reported large numbers of killed—rooms crowded with people all blown to pieces by the shells, walls bespattered with blood, and other horrors, which one always hears in war, and which are sometimes true. They also said they had just taken part in an assault upon a body of unmounted dragoons, who were cautiously approaching a barricade when the revolutionists opened fire upon them with revolvers from the houses on both sides, and killed ten. The men themselves were worn with sleepless excitement. They remained muffled up in their overcoats, and kept one hand fingering at the revolvers in their pockets.

Soon after daylight, the church bells began to ring for Divine service, and the big guns sounded again from the Tverskaya. Finding that sentries were still driving back every one who approached

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that part of the town, I went round by the University and reached the great Theatre Square in front of the Hotel Métropole. The battery of eight guns, which had been hidden inside the hotel, was now fully displayed across the square, apparently in readiness to bombard the Opera House. But, in fact, the guns were placed there only for reinforcement and to keep up a panic among the crowd, who came out now and then and watched them with interest from the opposite side, and then rushed away in sudden terror. Crossing the square in front of the battery, I was going up the street at the side of the hotel when I found a party of dustmen and police loading a cart with some bodies that lay upon the street. The things hardly looked human, they were so small and still and shapeless. Their faces were burnt away ; their clothes black, and so charred that they crumbled into cinders like burnt paper as the body was heaved into the cart.

I then saw that in the side of the hotel a vast black space had been blown out, like the entrance to a smoky cavern. It was the site of a gun-shop, which I had often examined with some curiosity and wonder ; for a gunmaker's is a dangerous trade in revolution. From a man who lived exactly opposite, I heard the story afterwards. Late on the Saturday evening a party of revolutionists went boldly across the street, and broke into the shop with hammers and axes. Other people appeared, and a small crowd

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had gathered, when a detachment of soldiers came round from the hotel and fired into the middle of them. They ran ; but the soldiers went back, and the crowd gathered again. This happened twice, and then the soldiers, being evidently terrified themselves, left the place alone. The revolutionists appear to have departed with their plunder, but a number of people remained searching about for what they could get, lighting matches and using long rolls of paper as candles. Just at midnight there was an immense explosion, and all that was left of the shop, together with the people in it, was blown into the street. The eye-witness described the ground as littered with dead, many of them in flames. Those were the charred bodies I saw being removed ; the others, who were killed and wounded by the soldiers, had already gone. But it seemed to me probable that the explosion was purposely caused by the revolutionaries, either to create terror, or to destroy the powder they could not use. What arms were actually obtained I cannot say. Many sporting guns had been in the window, but I had never seen any rifles or revolvers, though I had looked carefully, with this probability in view.

My own little hotel was close by, and after calling there, I went on to the nearest point of the circular Boulevard, only a hundred yards beyond. Here there was a clear view over the valley by the Ermitage and up the opposite hill to the Pushkin statue. A

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good many people had taken cover behind the trees, and were watching and listening, but the terror had much increased and there remained none of the sporting spirit of the day before. Death was too near and obvious now. Almost every instant a bullet came whizzing over the valley and was heard cutting through the trees or falling with a tiny hiss in the snow. At the corner of my street, close to a white monastery with a great classic tower, they had opened a back yard as a refuge for the wounded, though it did not fly the red cross, I think because it was privately managed by the revolutionists for their own people. The line of wounded who were hurried into it, dazed and groaning, was almost continuous, and all were received, whether revolutionists or not. Under an open shed inside I found a pitiful row of the dead lying on the stones, some terribly shattered by shell-fire, some killed by the rifle, so merciful when it strikes the brain or heart. We had helped in a man who was streaming blood from a shot in the neck, and we had hardly laid him down when a poor red-bearded peasant, all shaggy and caked from the fields, was dragged inside, his face dull white except at a great hole by his nose. But he was already dead and was put beside the others. Between the stones of that yard for the first time I saw men's blood trickling as in a gutter.

Hitherto many of the wounded and dying had been galloped up to the ambulance yards in sledges,

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but now I saw a driver who was hailed for a wounded girl turn sharp round and dash out of sight.

Another sledge was seized, but this driver also lashed his horse and tried to get away. He was dragged out of the sledge, and his arms were bound with his own whip, while two men, supporting the girl between them, brought her up the hill to the yard. Soon afterwards the sledges disappeared altogether, and for some days none could be had. It was said the drivers were afraid of having them taken for barricades; more probably they were only afraid of being shot, and in any case it was not profitable to carry the wounded. I believe the Government also forbade them running lest they should help revolutionists to escape.

Leaving the yard, I went down the hill and along the Petrovka, where the guns had battered two or three houses to pieces because a revolver had been fired from the windows. I had hoped to get into the Tverskaya by a little lane at the back of the Opera House, but the pickets were still keeping up a random fire down all those cross streets, and many passers-by were struck. One soldier deliberately aimed at an oldish man who was going along the Petrovka like myself. The man fell into a pile of snow by the edge of the road and kept on struggling to rise. But each time, when he had nearly got up, he lurched heavily forward again

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and fell on his face like a drunken man. The soldier who had hit him came up with another soldier and looked at his wound. Then they shouted to an ambulance cart that was passing the end of the street, and lifting the man carefully on to it, they sent him off to the Hotel Métropole, at the back of which, I think, the Zemstvo were establishing their main ambulance dépôt for soldiers and civilians alike. It is not often that a man who has done his utmost to kill another can so speedily do his utmost to keep him alive.

Unable to reach the guns from that side, I then determined to get in front of them and try to discover again what the revolutionists really intended. So I turned back and after some difficulty reached the main street of the Dmitrovka (Bolchaya Dmitrovka) which runs closely parallel to the Tverskaya. There I found a woman stooping over a body which lay on the curb-stone. It was a boy of about fifteen, dressed in the school uniform of a little blue cap and long grey overcoat. He had come out to see a battle—a real battle with men shooting bullets and slashing with swords. His little boots were close together, pointing upwards; his white-gloved hands thrown out upon the snow like a cross; and through his mouth was the dark red hole where the bullet had struck him. The woman had seen him fall and had come from her house. Two or three others now gathered round, and she

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brought out a red and white table-cloth in which we wrapt him. So we carried him to an ambulance room in a lane beside an ancient red-brick church close by. But he was dead before we reached the door.

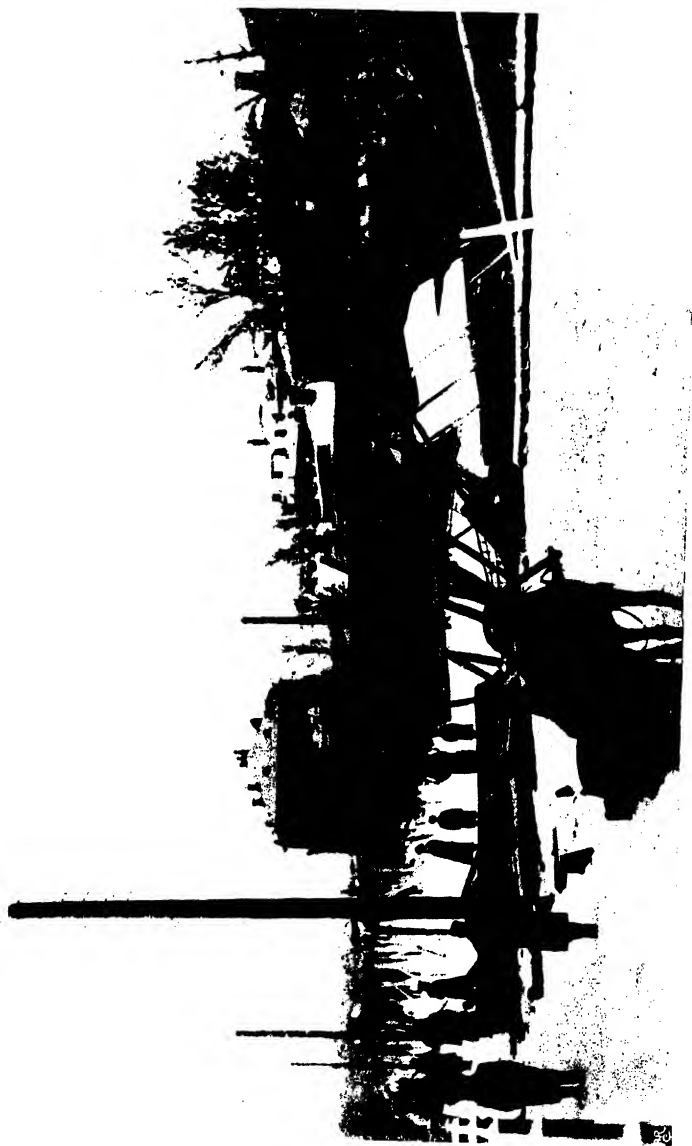
When I came to the Boulevard again, I was close to the Pushkin statue, so often mentioned because hitherto it had been the advance position of the guns. But now they had been taken forward further along the Tverskaya, and the square was empty but for a few sentries. The sharpshooters had also been removed from the Strestnoi bell-tower, but the Russian common people will long remember the impiety which placed them there, and a fine satiric cartoon represents them as they fired upon the crowd below, with the inscription, "God with us!" The Mala Dmitrovka, where the clerk had fallen in front of me the day before, was absolutely empty now, and I passed right along it without any interruption except for the wire entanglements. It brought me out, as I had hoped, upon the Sadovaya, or Garden Boulevard, which forms the outer circle round Moscow, as I described before, and reaching the point of intersection I saw at once that I had come to the very centre of the revolutionist position.

The four arms of the cross-road were all blocked with double or even treble barricades, about ten yards apart. As far as I could see along the curve of the Sadovaya on both sides, barricade succeeded

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barricade, and the whole road was covered with telegraph wire, some of it lying loose, some tied across like netting. The barricades enclosing the centre of the cross-road like a fort were careful constructions of telegraph poles or the iron supports to the overhead wires of electric trams, closely covered over with doors, railings, and advertisement boards, and lashed together with wire. Here and there a carriage or tramcar was built in, to give stability, and from the top of every barricade waved the little red flag. A similar fort had been built at the intersection of the Sadovaya with the Tverskaya, only a short distance to the right, and the whole of the road between was thronged with excited people, who hastened backwards and forwards, stood in eager groups at all the corners, and kept peering down the Tverskaya to discover if the guns were yet in sight. But the troops were advancing slowly, if at all. At intervals the guns fired—generally two in rapid succession—and we could hear the crash of the shells as they plunged into the houses or brought the brickwork rattling down. Every now and then came a quick outburst of rifle-shots—perhaps of revolver-shots—and a bullet or two went humming overhead. Each barricade was being assaulted separately, the guns firing first, and then the soldiers creeping up with rifles.

But it was not from the barricades themselves that the real opposition came. From first to last no



BARRICADES ON THE SADOVAYA.

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barricade was "fought," in the old sense of the word. To be sure, we afterwards saw photographs of enthusiastic revolutionists standing on the very summit of the barriers, clear against the sky, and waving red flags or presenting revolvers at space. But no such things happened, and the photographs were a simple kind of "fake." The barricades were never intended to be "fought." The only tactics of the revolutionists were ambush and surprise. Afterwards I heard stories of them lying down across the street in front of the advancing troops, and meeting case-shot and rifles with revolvers that cannot be trusted over twenty yards. Such stories are too ludicrous to be denied. The revolutionary methods were far more terrible and effective. By the side-street barricades and wire entanglements, they had rid themselves of the fear of cavalry. By the barricades across the main streets, they rendered the approach of troops necessarily slow. To the soldiers, the horrible part of the street fighting was that they could never see the real enemy. On coming near a barricade or the entrance to a side street, a few scouts would be advanced a short distance before the guns. As they crept forward, firing, as they always did, into the empty barricade in front, they might suddenly find themselves exposed to a terrible revolver-fire at about fifteen paces range from both sides of the street. It was useless to reply, for there was nothing visible to aim at. All they could do was to fire

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blindly in almost any direction, and perhaps the bullets killed some mother carrying home the family potatoes half a mile away. Then the revolver-firing would suddenly cease, the guns would trundle up and wreck the houses on both sides. Windows fell crashing on the pavement, case-shot burst in the bedrooms, and solid shell made round holes through three or four walls. It was bad for furniture, but the revolutionists had long ago escaped through a labyrinth of courts at the back, and were already preparing a similar attack in another street.

Among all those excited groups it was quite impossible to distinguish the sympathetic spectator or even the spy from the fighting revolutionist. It all seemed to me like an Aldershot field-day, in which the regulars on one side were fighting with ball cartridge against the usual crowd of onlookers, some of whom were secretly armed.

Leaving the central forts, I went for half a mile further along the continuation of the Dmitrovka, which here takes the name of Dolgoroukovskaya, and from end to end I found it crowded with work-people of the better class, all intensely excited and alert, and apparently all enthusiastic for the movement. But even when a man tried to work up trouble because I looked foreign and fairly well-dressed, I could not distinguish for certain which were the real revolutionists among them. The whole long street had been admirably barricaded,

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and as it runs out towards the Petrovsky Park and the open country, it seemed likely that it had been specially prepared as a line of retreat in case of disaster. Barricades were erected every thirty yards, and in one place the whole of the electric train had been drawn at right angles across the road in three lines, making far the largest barricade then existing in the world. Naturally the revolutionists were proud of it as a triumph of engineering art. Four red flags flew from its summit, and upon the largest flag some girl had stitched the white letters, "For Freedom." But there was another barricade which seemed to me simpler and finer in conception. Some revolutionists, probably boys, had piled a great wall of snow across the road, and then by pouring buckets of water upon it under the freezing sky, had converted it into an almost solid rampart of ice, which I doubt if any bullet could have penetrated. That was the barricade of genius.

When I returned to the central forts on the Sadovaya, the firing of the big guns had slackened, and I found out the reason afterwards. At the time I thought it was because the early dusk of mid-winter was falling, and having waited for a while to watch some revolutionary Red Cross parties set out in different directions, I made a short cut for home by way of the Flower Boulevard (Tsvietnoi). But as I was going along its valley towards the Ermitage,

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four big flashes in front, looking very orange in the twilight, warned me that guns had been brought down there to demolish the series of little barricades running across the gardens where I was. I think the troops were afraid of a flank attack on their right if they advanced further without clearing this ground, and, indeed, the barricades throughout the quarter were still rapidly increasing. Men and girls were throwing them up with devoted zeal, sawing through telegraph-poles, wrenching ironwork from its sockets, and dragging out the planks from builders' yards. I could still find no directing spirit—no general or staff to give orders for the whole army, as it were. But there must have been some sort of agreement in actions like this, and probably, if I had been able to converse like the rest, I should not have remained ignorant. But the foreigner, however well disposed, is inevitably suspected, and even offers of help in carrying and building are very coldly received, or rejected with threats. Yet I was much less likely than a Russian to be a spy, and no one could suffer greater mortification than being thus excluded from the party of revolt.

When I reached the hill where my hotel stood, I found that even in our own insignificant street, two barricades were being erected—one very conveniently placed just below my window—and the side streets leading down into the Petrovka were similarly blocked. The soldiers had evidently fired

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up these streets whilst the building was going on, for a bullet passing through a hotel window and wall and ceiling had left a memorial which the inhabitants continued to contemplate with pleasurable awe. The hotel cook also, having a moment of leisure in his kitchen, had run out into the yard to enjoy the battle, and leaning forward round a corner to gain the best possible view, had received a bullet through the heart. Now stretched in the stable, he cooked no more.

Late at night a strange figure appeared in the hall and stood thawing in front of the fire. It was dressed like a peasant, but surely no peasant since Adam's fall ever looked quite so comfortable and self-satisfied, and no peasant's clothes were quite so clean since Adam's first day in hides. After warming himself and peering about for a little while with twinkling eyes, he took off the peasant's raiment bit by bit, and stood before us in full uniform, a police-officer revealed. He had not come as an avenger, but with wrath restrained he only demanded figures regarding the dead, and he even stooped to take a special interest in the cook. There is a peculiar quality about the Russian official—a kind of friendliness in brutality, a brotherliness in slaughter—which springs from the sense of human kinship. Presently the hired assassin showed himself quite benign and communicative. He displayed revolutionary leanings. He informed us that if only the insurgents

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could maintain the fight for three days longer, the soldiers would be overcome. Already they were worn out with constant watching and harassing marches hither and thither without relief. The news, if true, could only mean that a large part of the garrison could not be relied upon by the Government, for otherwise there were plenty of troops in the city to supply reliefs. I believe the garrison then numbered eight infantry regiments (much undermanned, it is true), two Cossack regiments, one and a half of dragoons, and two brigades of guns. In all, the numbers were then estimated at eighteen thousand—not very many, it is true, but surely enough to hold a city against ill-armed insurgents. Something must evidently be strange in the temper of the men. So that peasant police-officer discoursed, and the hearts of his hearers were full of hope or dismay according to their inborn quality.

Towards midnight there was a sudden outburst of rifle-fire outside my window. A party of soldiers were assaulting the little barricade, which I had already come to regard with a sense of personal property. They poured bullet after bullet into it, but still it held out as long as it could, and only surrendered at last because it had no defenders. Bringing up copies of some suppressed organ of liberty as kindling, the soldiers then set it on fire, and it burnt slowly till dawn.

CHAPTER X

THE DAYS OF MOSCOW—III

IN many battles there comes a moment when little or nothing appears to have changed, and yet you suddenly realize that all is over but the running. Such a moment came on the morning of Christmas Day as I went up the Sadovaya towards the central revolutionist position where I had been the afternoon before. The barricades were still standing, the Sadovaya was still covered with such a network of wire about four feet from the ground that one had to walk under it bent double like a hoop, and no horse could have moved. The guns had not come perceptibly nearer, and in the centre of the town I had seen an officer stopped and deprived of his sword by half a dozen men with revolvers, who threatened to strip him naked, as another had been stripped the day before. There were rumours of all manner of wild enterprises on foot—attacks on stations, on prisons, on barracks. All these were favourable signs. Yet as I went along, I suddenly realized, “instinctively” as it is called, that the tide had

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turned, and that the highest moment of revolutionary success lay behind us.

I was so convinced of this that, wishing to photograph the barricades before they disappeared, I went all the way back to the hotel for my kodak. There was a brilliant sun, and as the firing had not yet become severe, I walked leisurely through the main position, selecting in my mind the best places ; for I had only one roll of films left, the rest having gone down the line. As on the previous day, a good many people were moving about in groups, besides the usual number of women passing up and down unconcernedly, since children must be fed, revolution or not. But from a number of unconscious signs, I felt the place was to be abandoned, and it appeared likely that the fighting revolutionists had already gone. So I began taking the views, and had just secured a fine construction of doors, benches, barrels, railings, shop-signs, and trees, when I found myself surrounded by a group of young men, evidently displeased. I soon perceived I had fallen into the midst of my friends. They were very quiet about it, and only one of them spoke. He was a dark Pole of about twenty-five, dirty and red-eyed with sleepless fighting, and he appeared to be informing me that I was a spy and must at once give up my camera. To make his meaning plainer, he stealthily drew a revolver from his coat pocket, and held it close against my side, whilst he repeated his demands in the same

The Days of Moscow—III

low voice. In two or three unknown tongues I appealed to him and the others, who had now closed in all round me, ready with the same stealthy argument. I smiled my hardest, assuring them I was at least as good a revolutionist by nature as they, and would rather explode the universal spheres than betray a stick of their barricades. I think they understood the smile, for their manner became less anti-social. But there was a movement among the crowd, and as I tried to escape in it, they again grew painfully insistent. In the end I had to give up the roll of films, and with that they appeared content, for they graciously let me keep the camera. But by their action their finest barricades lost a chance of immortality.

The incident only proved how impossible it was to know where the revolutionists were stationed, or in what force. There was nothing to distinguish these men from the numbers of others with whom they were mixing quite freely. It is true that, after this experience, I recognized them almost by intuition. As though by a law of nature, they assumed the conspirators' habit—the hat drawn down to the eyes, the long coat with the collar turned up, the hand constantly feeling in the pocket, the quick look of suspicion glancing every way. After a few days I think I could have picked out the leaders simply by their pale and intellectual faces, or their appearance of nervous and bloodshot excitement. But the

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possession of a revolver was the only admissible evidence, and that required search. By the soldiers it was taken as sufficient evidence for death without phrase, and any one caught with a revolver in his pocket had no further chance. Of course, the revolutionists were aware of this, and knew that death was as good as surrender. Whilst I was among them that morning, for instance, an English officer only a few streets away saw five men suddenly come upon a strong picket. They were summoned to halt, but, instead of halting, they walked quietly on, taking no notice. One after another they were shot down, till only one was left, and he also walked on, taking no notice. Then he was shot, and there was an end of the five. No doubt the more usual form of courage would have been to rush upon the picket and die fighting. But they may have been out of cartridges, and in any case it would be hard to surpass their example in passive bravery.

In expectation of sudden death like theirs, all the students, both men and girls, had stitched little labels inside the backs of their coats, so that, when they were killed, their parents might possibly hear the news and know the pride of having produced an adventurous child. I think most of the revolutionists had done the same, but the dead were piled up and carted into the country for burial with such indiscriminate carelessness, that I doubt if the

The Days of Moscow—III

precaution was of very much avail. And, indeed, it was not the revolutionist who suffered most during the days of combat, but the sightseers and the ordinary passers-by.

For myself, I was very unfortunate all that day. The guns began firing heavily again about eleven, and I tried many devices to reach their main position on the Tverskaya by passing from lane to lane in their rear. I even reached the Pushkin statue, from which I could see the limbers of the guns waiting under cover. But the continual threats of bayonets and rifles on every side, and the violent searching by the sentries became strangely demoralizing. Certainly the process of search that day was pleasingly simple in my case, because what underclothing I still possessed had gone to the wash, and all the shops were shut. But my kodak excited the utmost suspicion ; all the more, perhaps, because it was empty now.

Tired of all this, I turned down the main Boulevard westward for an interval of peace, but again I was singularly disappointed in my hope. The further I went, the more disturbed and dangerous the atmosphere of things became. Something was evidently happening down that way. Troops were marching hastily about, and two guns passed at full gallop. At one place I heard an officer's voice shouting some order, and the few people on the pavement near me began to run for their lives. I

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saw no reason to run till two soldiers came dashing at me through the trees with fixed bayonets. Then running was too late, and, seated on a railing, I awaited them, feeling that the centre of indifference was reached at last, and life and death were equal shades. But something induced them to respect so obvious a foreigner, and having again searched me and taken half a crown each as their reward for international amenity, they conducted me past an angle of a church and waved adieu.

Then I discovered the reason of all this excitement. New barricades were rapidly appearing across many of the streets leading down into the Boulevard from the right-hand, or north-west side. I continued along the circle almost to the point where the Boulevard ends, close to the great cathedral of the Saviour near the river, and all the way I saw signs of fresh conflict and heard sudden outbursts of rifle or revolver-firing. It was only after two or three days that I understood the real significance of this movement, by which the revolutionists were preparing for their final stand in the extreme north-west of the city. But at the time I thought they were merely attempting a feint upon the Government's left, just as they had tried on the right the day before. It seemed probable, also, that the movement was intended to cover their withdrawal from the main position where I had lately left them. And that, indeed, was their object, though they hoped

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rather to change their centre than to abandon the contest altogether.

Yet the crisis, as I had felt in the morning, was really over. When I passed through the middle of the city again, and out to my own quarter, the crowds were still running to and fro in panic round the Theatre Square, men and women were still falling unexpectedly in the streets, there was as much to do as ever in helping the wounded, and the ambulance yards were continually being filled. But the life seemed to have dropped out of the rising. People were talking with terror of a great peasant invasion, hundreds of thousands strong, that was already marching to deliver their Little Mother Moscow, and hew us all to pieces. With better reason they said that Mischenko, the hero of the Japanese war, was coming as military governor with 7,000 Cossacks. Hour by hour the citizens were agitated by new alarms, and the cautious began to think enough had been done for freedom, and to remember that something, after all, was due to the sacred stove of home. That night the revolutionists issued appeals calling for volunteers at six shillings a day and a revolver, the term of service to be limited to three days. For Russian fighting, or indeed for fighting in any land, the pay was magnificent. Even in nations like our own the risk of life is not valued above two shillings, and though the Russian soldier's pay was raised for this occasion,

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it only amounted to threepence three farthings. It was certainly safer for the moment to be a revolutionist than any other kind of citizen, because revolutionists generally knew which was the enemy and where he lay, but I do not think many volunteered for the sake of the pay or the mere delight of firing a revolver. Even if any recruits were gained by such inducements, their fighting, not being inspired by revolutionary spirit, was not likely to be glorious.

During the next two days, there was very little outward change in the position, except that the feeling of disaster grew, and most people began to recognize the winning side and arrange their own behaviour accordingly. The guns still sprinkled bullets over the barricades and wrecked the houses on each side. The soldiers continued their slow and perilous advance from street to street. People fell at random ; the hospital and ambulances were crowded beyond limit. On the Tuesday evening an official estimate put the killed and wounded at between 8,000 and 9,000. In ordinary wars all numbers are exaggerated, but in civil war the Government would probably not overstate the number of their victims, and when I went up on Tuesday, the troops had advanced very near to the Sadovaya, the firing was very heavy, and many were hit. But the sense of disaster and failure lay over all, and on that day, for the first time, I



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THE NEW ERA.

From *Sulphur* (Jupel).

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heard revolutionists beginning to describe the whole movement as a dress rehearsal and to congratulate themselves upon the excellent practice in street fighting which they had enjoyed.

On the Wednesday I was unable to go out, except only to cross the Theatre Square. And there I found a group of soldiers who had just taken part in an execution in the middle of the place. Some inmate of a hotel opposite the Métropole, possessed by a crazy spirit of slaughter or revolt, had fired a pistol at large from his window. The battery was placed in front of the hotel and the surrender of the man demanded. The proprietor gave him up without dangerous hesitation, and in a minute or two he was shot in front of the window from which he had fired. One would have liked to discover the kind of mania that seized him, but his death made that impossible.

The evening of the same day—or perhaps it was the evening before—another execution was carried out, more terrible in its circumstances, but better deserved, if any execution is deserved. A band of revolutionists—the English papers, getting news chiefly through St. Petersburg, said three hundred of them, but that is absurd—made their way by some means unobserved to the house of the chief of the secret police, close to the gendarmes barracks. Knocking at the door, they demanded to see Voiloshnikoff, the chief himself. He came out to them,

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his wife and children looking on with terror in the background, and in spite of the entreaties and tears of woman and child, they placed him in front of the door and shot him on the spot. No doubt he had done many atrocious things, and had cared little enough for the entreaties of women and children himself. But most people regarded this act of wild justice as inhuman, and regretted, not the paid criminal's removal from the world, but the manner of it.

An hour or two before daylight next day (Thursday, the 28th), I had to go to a house on the further side of the Sadovaya to help bring provisions and toys for an English family which had taken refuge in the hotel after spending some dull days in cellars. As we walked through the streets standing in silence audible under the transparent darkness of the morning, we saw the pickets squatting round orange fires of planks which they had kindled in the middle of the road. But beyond searching us once or twice, they did not interfere with our purpose, and the only real danger came from the police, who had that morning received brand new rifles—light-coloured things like toys, with fixed bayonets—which they hugged in both arms, or held horizontally over their shoulders, to the peril of all bystanders, while in their hearts they longed to put them to their natural use, with all the tremulous bravery of girls out rabbit-shooting.

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But before we reached the Sadovaya, we had passed all the pickets, and hardly any one was visible on the streets. Some of the barricades were on fire or gently smouldering; the rest stood deserted. The pavements were strewn with glass and bricks. Houses on both sides were ruined with shell. Some were burning, and in two or three the beds and furniture were being thrown out of the shattered windows. We noticed how wild the shell-fire had been, for houses quite a hundred yards from the main streets were struck, evidently at random. But all was unguarded now. When daylight found us leaving the English flat with our load, there was still no one visible, and I think a battalion might have marched through the district in fours without receiving a shot. Even the red flags had been removed from the barricades, to be kept, one hopes, for another occasion, and almost the only sign of life was that here and there I observed a dvornik (the door-keeper who watches the Russian home) cutting down the network of telegraph wire with a hatchet and rolling it up. He reminded me of some trusty servant methodically putting away the stage properties on the morning after private theatricals.

For the rest of that day the guns and soldiers were engaged in clearing the quarter of barricades, entanglements, and all. It was an easy task now, though the firing was more violent than ever, as

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the progress was more rapid. For the revolutionists had received orders from their committee that morning to abandon the street fighting and scatter to their homes or out into the country, continuing the propaganda and holding themselves ready for the next opportunity. Some escaped, at least for the time. Some refused to obey, but continued the fighting, as we soon discovered. Many were seized, and for days afterwards small parties of soldiers or police in every street drove some unhappy creature in front of them with his hands tied. What became of these prisoners, we only suspected at the time ; we found out later. On this part of the Moscow rising, there is no more to chronicle but massacre. And so the barricades and their defenders faded into history, and law and order were restored.

That Thursday at noon, a decree went forth from Admiral Dubasoff commanding all shutters to be taken down, all doors opened, and business to be resumed on pain of martial law. Then the heart of the shopkeeper was glad. For eight days all shops had been shut ; banks were closed, merchants did no business, and, as the German song says, no mill wheel turned around. It is always hard not to smile at the money-making classes whenever the great passions of human existence appear upon the surface and shake their routine. Yet we need not make light of their sufferings. They had suffered at the heart. For months past

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they had been deprived of the profit which is their single aim. For more than a week they had taken absolutely nothing, and the whole credit of the country was so shaken that they could not hope for advance of capital. Their occupation was gone, and no return of it seemed likely. Besides the ordinary bankers, merchants, and shopkeepers, we must include among them the hotel and restaurant keepers, the theatrical managers, actresses, music-hall people, prostitutes, and all such as live by pleasing or amusing the wealthy. We ought further to include artists, musicians, authors, lawyers, journalists, and professors, but as a rule their profits are so small that their losses would hardly count in the universal ruin. To take a single instance of the immense injury to trade, the mere damage to house property from the shells and bullets was estimated at £10,000,000, and all of it was dead loss, except to the builders and glaziers. The Sytin printing works, wantonly destroyed by the Government for printing the Liberal newspapers, was valued at £300,000. There was no reason to be surprised, therefore, at the comfortable joy which welcomed the Government's ruthless decree. Perhaps it might seem a little indecent, while the dead who had fought for freedom were still lying in frozen layers at the police stations, or were being thrown neck-and-crop upon sledges for their unknown burial. But we must make a large allowance

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for business habits, which tiresome revolutions interrupt. Think of the feelings of our own City men if suddenly the morning train which for years they had caught successfully, stopped running and shells rained from Holborn Viaduct to Aldgate Pump! With what common sense they would welcome the restoration of any tyranny, with what scorn decry the fallen sentimentalists who had cared for freedom! So in Moscow, returning law and order met a greasy smile, and many extolled the Governor-General and officers for the vigour of their action. Skin for skin; yea, all that a man hath will he give for his livelihood.

So "intercourse was resumed," and the shop-keeping heart rejoiced. But on Friday morning an uneasy feeling stole abroad that all was not quite satisfactory yet. About two miles west of the Kremlin there is an isolated manufacturing district called Presna or Presnensky. A little stream with two or three ponds, running from the back of the Zoological gardens into the Moscow river, separates it from the main town, and to the north of it lies that ill-fated Khodinsky Polé, the plain where the crowds were crushed to death at the Tsar's coronation. The district is about a mile square, and various factories stand there, for cotton, furniture, varnish, boiler-making, and sugar. Some of them are under English management, and in English commerce the place is known as Three Hill Gates,



“INTERCOURSE IS RESUMED.”

From *Streli (Arrows)*.

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because the country beyond gently rises into slopes that would pass for hills in Russia.

It gradually became known that a large number of work-people—ten thousand of them it was said—were holding this district, and had set up there a little revolution of their own, under an organized system of sentries, pickets, and fighting force. A few students and educated girls had come over to them from the revolutionists of the barricades disguised as mill hands; indeed, a girl of eighteen was described as their most powerful leader, and in all probability those streets which I had seen barricaded on the extreme left of the Government advance on the Wednesday, were blocked to give time for the Presnensky preparations. But in the main it was a work-people's affair, and on the Friday they held undisturbed possession of the district, their sentries marching up and down with revolvers and red flags, while they naïvely boasted themselves confident of terminating the exploitation of labour and establishing Social Democracy at a stroke.

But law and order were already at their work of disillusionment. That very day the fashionable regiment of the Semenoffsky Guards, under command of Colonel Min, already notorious as a slaughterer of the people, arrived from St. Petersburg, though the revolutionists made a gallant attempt to stop the railway by tearing up the lines.

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In the evening a cordon of troops was drawn round the district, and batteries were placed on five positions, at ranges of 1000 to 2000 yards. One stood on a high bank near a bridge over the little stream I mentioned ; another was a point nearer the Zoo, where the gunners had to fight for the position, and burnt down several rows of small houses ; a third was in the cemetery, where they met with no opposition ; a fourth far away on the lowest slope of the Three Hills ; and the fifth must have been stationed somewhere down by the Moscow river, but I did not discover it.

The district was thus surrounded by batteries, and at dawn on Saturday the guns opened upon the mills and neighbouring houses. There were no guns to reply, and the gunners consequently made "excellent practice," plumping their shells down where they liked, crashing through the windows, or raising red clouds of brickdust from the battered walls. It was about as leisurely and safe a piece of slaughter as ever was seen. The large furniture factory was soon alight, and burnt quickly to the ground. So did the fine house of its owner and manager, a German-Russian named Schmidt, who was justly suspected of holding Liberal opinions, and was afterwards shot for the crime. The Marmentoff varnish works on the top of the hill also took fire, and its tanks continued to burn for many days and nights, rolling thick clouds of smoke into the air all day, and

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casting a brilliant crimson light upon the evening sky. The great Prokhoroffsky cotton mill was battered, and many shells burst in its rooms, but it was saved from fire by its automatic "sprinklers," which, however, ruined the machinery by rust. Many shells burst against the owner's house on the hill, for he too had committed the sin of Liberalism. During the bombardment, his wife gave birth to a child, an unpropitious time for herself and the nurses. But the guns were chiefly directed against the large workmen's barracks attached to the mills, and these were soon shattered, though they did not burn. The small rows of cottages, where the married men lived with their families, being made of wood, blazed up at once, and it was in them that most of the people were killed. At the time it was reported that the gunners were ordered to fire on the lower stories, so that the people upstairs might not escape. I doubt whether gunners could make that distinction at the range, but, in any case, many people were cut to pieces by the segment shells and stifled by the flames. In one upper story alone, nine old men and women, who had been collected there for safety, were burnt to death.

The shelling was particularly heavy from eight to nine in the morning, and again from one to two. As the wooden houses caught fire, and the work-people were driven out in helpless crowds from their barracks by the crash of shells, the soldiers came

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crowding in with rifle and sword, and met with little organized resistance. The troops employed were Cossacks, a Warsaw regiment, and the fashionable Semenoffsky Guards, who had arrived, as I noticed, only the day before, and to the end of the insurrection displayed a surpassing bloodthirstiness and brutality. No Moscow men were present, though I was told by an officer that the Rostoff regiment, which had been regarded as dubious for some weeks past, entreated to be set in the front throughout the fighting, and at every chance engaged in the slaughter with a ferocity well calculated to recover the Government's esteem. The whole of that Saturday appears to have been one long massacre of men, women, and children, who were blown up, shot, and hewn in pieces with delightful ease, and almost uninterrupted security. But that day I was myself unable to penetrate the thick line of sentries which surrounded the district and were engaged in shooting down escaping refugees and preventing witnesses of the massacre from entering.

In the afternoon an event happened which illustrates the spirit in which the Government's agents carried out their work. Living in the Presnensky district, which has some streets of wealthy villas at the upper end, was a doctor named Vorobieff, well known in Russia as a man of science and a writer on medical discoveries. At the beginning of the bombardment he hung an ambulance flag from his

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window, to give notice to the wounded where they might obtain assistance. His landlord came and asked him to take it down, because the red cross would naturally draw the fire of Government troops. He took it down, but continued attending to any wounded who came. Presently a party of police, under an officer named Ermoleff, who had formerly been an officer in the Guards cavalry, came to the house and accused him of assisting revolutionists. He replied that he was not a revolutionist himself, but it was his duty as a surgeon to give every possible help to the wounded, no matter what their opinions might be. "Have you a revolver?" Ermoleff suddenly asked him. Yes, he said, he had a revolver, but he held the Government licence for it. "Go and fetch your licence," cried Ermoleff. And as the doctor turned to go upstairs, he fired his pistol into the back of his head and blew his brains out. "Oh, what have you done?" cried his wife, who had been standing at the doctor's side. "Hold your tongue, and wipe up that mess," answered the ex-officer of the Guards cavalry, and withdrew his party.*

All that night Moscow saw the flames raging to the sky. Many of the revolutionists, and many of the ordinary work-people too, tried to escape from the district, especially across the frozen river, and it

* After the rising was suppressed, this officer was detained for a fortnight and then released.

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was along the river banks that most of them were shot down. Early next morning, on the excuse of visiting the English overseers who were shut up in the district, I succeeded in penetrating the cordon of troops, though I was searched nine or ten times from head to foot, and the sledge was searched as well. Two Russian journalists from St. Petersburg, who tried to follow me, were less fortunate, for by the command of the officers, they were so shamefully beaten and stamped upon that they hardly escaped alive, and one of them, still exhausted with terror and pain, came to my room some hours later to have his wounds dressed. All round the edge of the district, the wretched work-people were now trying to escape to their villages upon any kind of sledge that would move. Into these sledges they had heaped all their household possessions—feather beds, furniture, cooking things, and heavy old trunks with clothes. Sometimes the toys already bought for Christmas were laid carefully on the top—the doll or scarlet parrot—and one woman carried a baby on one arm and a wooden horse under the other. But when it came to the line of pickets, every sledge was emptied, all the boxes unpacked, and their contents strewn upon the snow. The people also were searched with customary brutality—the old people beaten, the young insulted. The soldiers thrust their hands into the girls' breasts and under their skirts. One girl was passed on from soldier to

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soldier and searched six times within about twenty yards. "God spit at them!" muttered the women as they crawled away.

The guns were still in position around the district, and firing was to begin again in an hour. But on such mills as were still standing, the white flag now waved. Arms were being surrendered, and the dead were collected in rows upon the frozen surface of a pond. In one place was a mutilated child of nine; in another a baby's arm, cut off at the shoulder and across the fingers, lay on the snow. For law and order were being restored. Near the mills I found many hundreds of work-people standing idly round their ruined barracks and smouldering homes. A barrack for mill-hands, as I have already shown, is not much of a place. The beds are jammed close together in rows; everything is hideous, the smell intolerable. Nor are the doghutch homes for married people much better. But at all events they had been warm. Now the workmen and their families had nowhere to go, and for the last three mornings the thermometer had stood at eighteen degrees below zero (Réaumur). Probably many homeless people were given shelter at night in other crowded rooms, but all day long they remained shivering helplessly among the ruins.

I waited for some time in an English manager's house, expecting the guns to re-open fire. But no

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firing came, though the guns remained all day in position. As far as open fighting went, the Moscow rising was over. When I returned next morning (Monday, January 1st) I found the guns had been withdrawn, and the streets and ruins and mills were held by strong detachments of Cossacks and Guards. The surrender was complete. Three of the leaders had just been bayoneted to death, and their bodies were lying outside a shed. The remains of the last revolutionary band were cooped up as prisoners in the sugar-mill yard, and soldiers stood round the thick crowd of them, while the leaders were being sorted out for execution. Many women were found among them, and a large proportion of the dead were women too. Indeed, considering that this was mainly a work-people's movement, it was remarkable how large a part the women played.

Of the killed it was impossible to form an accurate estimate. In the Presna district itself they said that eighty work-people were killed during the bombardment of Saturday morning. Perhaps 200 were killed in all, including those who tried to escape across the river. As to the larger question of the casualties during the whole ten days of the rising, every kind of estimate was heard between 5000 and 20,000. I have even heard of enterprising newspapers which put the total of killed alone at 25,000. But it takes a lot of killing to make a thousand dead, and after going carefully

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into such figures as I could get with two experienced officials who knew the city well, it seemed to me probable that the killed numbered about 1,200, and the wounded perhaps ten times that amount. But the truth can never be accurately known. The frozen bodies were piled up in police stations and other places till they could be carried out into the country by train and laid in hasty trenches. When I was in St. Petersburg many weeks later, a truck-full of them arrived by mistake at the Moscow station there. The authorities denied it, but no one doubted the truth.

After our New Year's Eve the process of vengeance and execution went on without further interruption. In the Presnensky district the prisoners were usually shot in batches—sixteen, twenty, or even thirty-five together, as I was told by an overseer who lived close by and saw it done. The work-people were set in a row before the firing party, and were driven forward three at a time. Three by three they were shot down before the eyes of the others. The heap of dead increased. Three more were driven forward to increase it, till at last only a heap of dead was left. In the case of two workmen, suspected of being leaders, there was a variety in the proceedings, perhaps by way of a practical joke. They were ordered by the officer just to walk round a corner of the sugar mill. They went carelessly, with their hands in

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their pockets, and when they turned the corner they were faced by eight soldiers standing at the present. In an instant they fell dead, and their bodies remained for a long time lying on the ground for all passers-by to see. Such executions continued among these factories for more than a week, and the numbers of those poor and uneducated men and women who died for their protest against despotism will never be known.

Nor will the numbers of the victims within the city itself be known. As I have said, on every street you met parties of soldiers and armed police bringing them to the police-stations. Even at the beginning of the rising, we have seen that prisoners were shot because the prisons were too full to hold them. It is quite certain that they had no mercy now, but what exactly became of them inside the walls, one could only judge from terrible hints and rumours that people whispered to each other. On the last day of the year, in a friend's house, I met a skilled craftsman, an educated and middle-aged man, who from his own workroom could reach a window overlooking a police-yard. There, he said, one could watch the prisoners brought in and briefly examined by an officer. They were then strapped to a board and beaten almost to death, and if they were people of no account they were handed over to the executioners to be "broken up"—that is the English sportsman's phrase for hares and foxes

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overtaken by the hounds. They were broken up. Their bones were smashed, their legs and arms lopped off with swords, and it did not take them very long to die.

The story may have been one of the exaggerations of war, but the man was a quiet and ordinary citizen, with no reason for lying, and he invited us quite freely to come and view the place, always soaked with blood. People of both parties who had lived many years in Moscow, did not hesitate to believe it, and they often told me of things still worse—of nameless things committed in the empty and windowless chambers of police-stations, where no light enters and no cry escapes.

One murder was especially talked about, because the victim happened to be the son of a leading barrister, who was a friend of the Governor himself. The boy was seized near the Riding School Barracks, close to the university, either on suspicion or for open hostility. The Sumsky Dragoons flogged him as usual, and their officer, finding him still alive, asked why they had not finished him off. An infantry officer who was standing by, took the news to the father, and he appealed to the Governor in person, asking only that the guard to take his son to prison should be composed of Moscow infantry and not of dragoons. The Governor replied that of course his request should be granted, and every consideration shown. Nevertheless, it was

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dragoons who formed the guard, and the boy never reached the prison alive.

Rumours reached us also about the fate of the revolutionists who had walked away into the country or afterwards escaped by train. I found some of them as prisoners a few weeks afterwards, at a long distance from Moscow ; but many were overtaken on the road or shot by soldiers at the stations. The Semenoffsky Guards especially distinguished themselves by their zeal in hunting them down, and their exultation in the slaughter ; but considerable allowance must be made for them, because they had not been given a chance of slaughtering the Japanese, and like all brave soldiers they naturally pined for active service.

So much for the men and women who had dared to strike for liberty. But having extinguished their efforts, Admiral Dubasoff devised a further method for discouraging the growth of Liberal opinions in the future—a method much applauded by the supporters of law and order, who hailed it as an admirable means of bringing ridicule upon the whole revolutionary cause. He ordered the police to arrest all suspected boys and girls in the Moscow schools and bring them to the police-stations. There they were handed over to soldiers, who stripped them, and, if they were under fifteen, beat them with their hands. Between fifteen and eighteen, the girls and boys alike were stripped and beaten with rods,



DUBASOFF'S ROLL-CALL.

From *Burelom (The Storm)*.

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though the girls received only five strokes and the boys twelve. I was told of this new device by reactionaries who had heard it from police-officers, knew of cases in which it had been carried out, and admired its admixture of sensuality with cruelty as likely to keep young people in their places for the future. But I could not help wondering how long a government in England would last if it handed grown girls over to soldiers to be stripped and flogged because they were suspected of Liberal opinions. I wondered also whether our own people who were then beginning to ridicule the revolutionists, and to welcome the restoration of order, ever in the least realized what is meant by order under Russian rule. And I wondered most of all how Frenchmen could still be found to advance money for the support of such a Government. But investors have neither pity nor shame.

In the midst of these scenes came the Russian Christmas Day (January 7th). It was celebrated as usual with superb ceremony in the enormous church of Christ the Saviour, which stands in the west of the city, above the river. Soon after dawn the people began to assemble, and by ten o'clock the vast space under the domes was packed with crowds, all standing up, except when, here and there, a man or woman forced the neighbours to make room for prostration on the floor. Bodies of troops stood at every corner round the building. The

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Governor-General arrived, the military staff arrived, the scene was radiant with uniforms. In any case, the ceremony is half military, for the great church of Christ the Saviour was built to commemorate Napoleon's retreat. But it was not of Napoleon that the heroes of massacre were thinking that day.

The service began. In the centre, under the dome, stood a bishop—perhaps an archbishop—with gleaming mitre, his robes stiff with gold, his appealing arms supported by gorgeous priests. Between him and the altar veiled books were carried to and fro, books were brought with an escort of priests to be kissed, or were read in the unintelligible mutter of solemnity. Long-haired figures bore candles up and down ; the bishop raised two candles high in air, crossing them so that they guttered down his robes, while he turned to the compass points of the church, to bestow his blessing upon all. Old priests and young, glittering in the uniforms of holiness, came to kiss his hands. In splendid humility he was supported to the altar. A veiled basin was brought for him to wash in. A golden priest knelt with the sacred towel hanging round his neck. The bishop washed, and upon the golden priest's neck he replaced the sacred towel. The Re-incarnation of Christ began. On each side of the altar a choir of boys and men, apparelled in scarlet and black and gold, raised the glory of Russian music in alternate chant. From arch to arch ran the gleam of the

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kindling tapers till the marble walls and gilded capitals shone with points of fire.

Muttering and sobbing with devotion, the masses of mankind swayed up and down, as they bowed and crossed themselves in the gloom below. Struggling to touch the polished pavement with their foreheads, they fell upon the ground. The boom of distant bells was heard ; a small bell tinkled close at hand. In front of the altar stood a black-maned priest, and with uplifted arm and upturned face, he called upon Christ. He called and called again, his immense voice bellowing round the cathedral, as though an organ had been wrought up to full power and one great note held firmly down. So he called upon Christ to come—Christ the Saviour, Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

CHAPTER XI

IN LITTLE RUSSIA

THE failure at Moscow fell like a blight upon all Russia, and hope withered. The revolutionists, certainly, protested that much was gained. They admitted that they had allowed their hand to be forced by the Government. The attempt, they knew, was ill-timed and ill-devised. But they had not intended to win this time ; the rising was only a dress rehearsal for the great revolution hereafter. They were teaching the proletariat the methods of street fighting, and after all it was something to have held a large part of the ancient capital for ten days against the Government troops. Such a thing had never been accomplished before. They were proud of it, and when the hour of defeat came they pointed to the high service which even reaction performed for the cause by combining all parties again in opposition to the common oppressor.

Of these various pleas, the last alone could stand. The ferocity of the Government's vengeance, the unscrupulous disregard of all its pledges under the reactionary terror, certainly obliterated the differences

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between the parties of progress, and smoothed away the growing enmities of rivals in their country's salvation. Persecution is a powerful bond, and when all are gagged, silence passes for agreement. There need be no question that for the time the ruthlessness of the repression only inflamed the revolutionary spirit, and combined all sections against the pitiless and incapable clique which was bringing ruin upon the people. How far such a lesson might be permanent, how long such unity of purpose amid differences would be maintained when the pressure of adversity was removed, could only be known when the next opportunity for revolution came. For the moment unity was gained.

Otherwise the failure was only disastrous. It had proved too expensive for a dress-rehearsal, and to fight for defeat is seldom worth the pain. It deprived the movement of its prestige. The revolution was no longer an unknown and incalculable power, springing from secret roots, no one knew where. The Government had gained all the advantages of a general who has carried out a successful reconnaissance and discovered the enemy's limitations. They knew now on whom they could rely, and many of the wealthy and educated classes who had rather enjoyed posing as Liberals when they thought it was the fashion, now began to appreciate the virtues of the ancient regime with fresh intelligence.

One thing, above all, the failure had proved :

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the devil was still on the side of the big battalions. The real hope of the revolutionists had been that the troops would come over to the side of freedom,—that the soldiers would “fraternize.” They had some grounds for the hope. Mutinies had been frequent and serious, the war scandals were partially known throughout the army, the soldiers themselves sprang from the people and would return to the people. It might be that they would hesitate to shoot men and women so like their own relations at home.

Large quantities of revolutionary literature had been distributed among the garrisons, and many of the reservists had already professed Socialism. But when it came to action none of these things counted against the cowardice of obedience and the fear of death. It is true that comparatively few of the garrison infantry were employed, though, as I have noticed, even the disaffected Rostoff regiment clamoured to be led to the front. But the gunners, who were supposed to be very uncertain, were the chief instruments of suppression, and both the dismounted Sumsky Dragoons and the Semeneffsky Guards, when they arrived, displayed a bloodthirsty lust for massacre which could not have been surpassed by the most loyal mercenaries.

Put a man in uniform, feed him, give him arms, and he may generally be depended upon to shoot as directed. Obedience is only a temptation to sloth,

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and it becomes almost irresistible when the temptation is supported by fear of death. The soldier who "fraternized" had everything to lose, and the revolutionists could offer him nothing—nothing but a revolver, a dubious payment for three days without food or clothing, and a prospect of almost certain death if they failed. To win over an army, the revolutionists must first command a public purse. They must point to some Parliament, Assembly, Committee—some authoritative body which can supply food, clothes, and pay. This was the advantage of our own Parliament in its struggle against despotism; it could draw upon legitimate taxes, the King could only melt down plate. And under modern conditions, unless the revolutionists can win over the army, a revolution by violence appears almost impossible. That was why the immediate occasion of our own revolution was the dispute between the King and Parliament about the command of the militia at Hull. Add to these instincts of obedience and self-preservation the promise of better food held out to the army in the Tsar's Christening-Day Manifesto; add the weariness and irritation of street fighting, the terror of sudden death lurking at every window, the memory of women's jibes and taunts during the past few weeks, and you get a temper which will stick at no methods and be troubled by no remorse. Among poverty-stricken and uneducated men, with no employment

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or home or resources of their own, I doubt if enthusiasm for freedom should ever be counted upon against the restraining powers of habit, uniform, and rations.

That was the main lesson of Moscow, and the Government was quick to learn it. They knew their power depended entirely upon the command of the army and police, but for the present that was secure. The command of the army and police depended again upon their ability to pay them, and, with an estimated deficit of £50,000,000 for the coming year and a real deficit of about £80,000,000, finance was the weak point in the Government's defences. But Kokovtsoff was now in Paris negotiating a loan by which at least the French might pay their own interest on their own advances for one year, and for the future everything might be hoped from the power of reaction. On January 9th, Witte replying to a deputation of the gently Conservative "League of October 30th," announced his conversion to violent and repressive measures with characteristic tearfulness. Whining like an apostate who blubbers over the God he has betrayed, he cried—

"There was a time when I sought the confidence of the people, but such illusions are no longer possible. I have always been opposed to repression myself, but am now compelled to resort to it, merely as the result of having trusted my countrymen."

While he was thus speaking, I myself was moving

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very slowly south-west from Moscow towards Kieff, over indistinguishable spaces of snow marked only by rare and desolate villages of wooden huts and sheds. During the twenty-eight hours of the journey, we passed a few miserable towns as well, and on the side platforms of every station I noticed great piles of sacks sopping in the snow and rain ; for a premature thaw had set in and there was hardly a shred of tarpaulin to cover them. I found out afterwards that these sacks held the last summer's harvest—the grain which ought to have been feeding Russia and Europe. But it lay rotting there while peasants starved, because the thousand trucks which should have taken it to market were standing idle in Siberia or dragging men and horses slowly home, and the Government which had made war upon Japan was now entirely occupied in flogging or shooting the men and women who differed from their policy.

Kieff, like Moscow and other towns, was exposed to all the violence of martial law, which, indeed, for various reasons had become almost chronic there. The city has often shown herself the birthplace of revolution, and she is kept in almost continual ferment by the opposition between her piety and her intellect. She boasts herself the ancient centre of Russian religion and, at the same time, of Russian thought—a strange combination, but that the religion is mainly subterranean and the thought dwells in

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the upper air. As objects of pilgrimage her holy shrines are unrivalled. Peasants from all over Russia visit Kieff by hundreds of thousands a year. They come to pray at the ancient church of St. Sophia—a circle of dark and unexpected chapels clustering round a central dome, where mosaics on golden ground dimly gleam to the few tapers below, but all else is dark, and invisible forms are heard moving in shadow, as a priest intones, or an outburst of deep chanting sounds from unseen altars. But most pilgrims are more attracted by the mummied forms of Russian saints who lie at rest in catacombs far underground, below the churches and monasteries of the sacred Lavra hill, which looks across the Dnieper to the great plain of unenclosed fields and forests beyond. With coffin lids open to preclude deception, the saints are laid in the rock-cut passage or niche where once they spent their dull years of suffering because the torments of ordinary life upon the surface were insufficient for their zeal. Nay, one who, regardless of health, lived buried in earth to his shoulders for thirty years, stands buried so still. The rest lie wrapt in coloured cloth through which their face and form may only obscurely be discerned; but when I examined the cloth I found it genuine. Year after year their holy shrines are watched by silent monks, who sit beside them with lighted tapers, religiously idle, while the long files of peasants pass and give

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their pence, and kiss the cotton coverings, and gulp the holy water which as a final blessing is presented them to drink from the hollow of a silver cross. Or if any one refuses to drink, the monk pours the water down his back, in the hope that even upon a heretic the efficacy of so great a blessing may not be entirely wasted.

But above ground, Kieff is the mother of science and intellectual progress, as far as such things can exist in Russia at all. Upon the surface of her pretty hills, stand a famous University, a great Polytechnic, and many schools. Ever since the fourteenth century, when there was no such great distinction between divine and human knowledge, Kieff has been conspicuous for her learning, and she still claims equal rank with Moscow and St. Petersburg. Hers was the first printing press of Russia, and it is she who has provided the training for most of Russia's recent politicians up to Witte himself—politicians as distinct from officials, who are produced according to regulation type by the more passive and unimaginative races of other districts. For Kieff is the real capital of Little Russia, and the Little Russians have no doubt that they are the intellectual people. They call themselves the Midi of Russia, the Provençals, the people of the sunny south. They are Slavs themselves, but they claim the Slavs of Galicia or such Slavs as are found in Prague as their nearest relations, and though their

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language is only a Slavonic dialect, it is unintelligible to other Russians, and is a bond of union only among the dwellers in the Ukraine or marches or borderland of the south-west.

Even in winter the dress of Little Russian peasants is brilliant and distinctive. They go in cheerful crimson and orange, and their skirts and aprons are worked with barbaric embroidery, as among the Bulgarian Slavs of Macedonia. Their music and dances are like no other in Russia, being comparatively gay. The artistic instincts run in their blood, and the women supply the Empire with singers, actresses, dancers, and others among whom beauty counts for wealth. In ordinary life even a stranger notices at once that the people are better mannered and more cheerful, though that does not imply an unseemly excess of merriment.

In language, in life, and in temperament the distinction is almost as much marked as between two kindred but separate races, but among the Little Russians there is no proposal of separation. They would gladly become a home-ruled State in a Russian Confederacy, provided their defence were insured and they suffered no commercial loss. But their great fear is not of Russia but of Poland, lest any marked improvement in their position should bring more Poles among them to swallow them up. Already the Poles are gathering the commerce and land into their hands, and Poles are regarded much



A LITTLE RUSSIAN.



A TRAMP.

In Little Russia

like the Jews, as insinuating people, unscrupulous, and horribly clever. Little Russia is apprehensive of Poland very much in the same way as Poland is apprehensive of Germany. Worse than all, the Poles are Catholic and care nothing for Theodosius and Nestor and the eighty mummied saints of Kieff. The Little Russian knows of only two religions beside his own—the “Old Believers,” who in spite of all the death and torture they have suffered for two centuries and have so richly deserved for holding up a heretical number of fingers in the blessing, still remain in the family of the Church, as the poor relations of Orthodoxy; but, apart from them, he only knows “the Polish,” by which he means the Catholic—schismatics hardly removed from heathendom, who worship images instead of pictures, and keep their Easter wrong, and do not compel their priests to marry, but are predestined to eternal fire.

As it is, the Polish element is very strong in Little Russia, and so is the German, the Bohemian, and the Galician. For Kieff has been the great centre of international intercourse during the last fifty years, ever since an English engineer, with English workmen, and English materials, threw a suspension bridge over the wide stream of the Dnieper there, and placed it on the great high-road of South Russia. The bridge was lately reconstructed, and it is a sign of change that a Russian

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engineer was now employed, with Russian workmen, and Russian materials, and still it stands. But the result of all this admixture in Kieff has been that the Little Russian movement is disappearing before the general longing for great constitutional changes throughout the Empire. For themselves, the Little Russians would be well content if they were allowed the free use of their language, which is now forbidden both in print and on the stage, while a Little Russian newspaper which ventured to peep out after the October Manifesto was at once stamped upon. But for the larger aspects of progress, Kieff has never failed to supply revolutionists alike eloquent and daring.

When I arrived in the city the surface looked quiet enough, though martial law still prevailed. Some ten weeks had passed since the Loyalists or the Black Hundred, directed by the police, protected by the soldiers, and bearing crosses and portraits of the Tsar in procession, had sacked and plundered down the main street ; while in front of the Town Hall a military band played the national anthem to enliven their patriotism. On that occasion the Liberals were saved by the riches of the Jews, for the patriots preferred free and easy plunder to risky assassination. So the Cossacks who were ordered out to suppress the tumult, ranged up their horses in front of the Jewish shops, and took heavy toll of the plunder as the thieves came out through

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the line with their loads. The police and hotel-keepers took toll in the same way ; indeed, the proprietor of the best hotel in the town accumulated so valuable a reward from the neighbouring jewellers' shops that even patriots regarded his patriotism as overstepping the requirements of citizenship and good taste.

That day the blessings of this world were very widely distributed in Kieff, but it happened that almost the only non-Jewish house attacked was the British Consulate. Outside this house, which stands within forty yards of the main street, and bears over its door the usual painted placard of the British arms, a garrison officer formed up his company in a half-circle, and ordered them to pour volleys into the windows. Apparently he acted out of mere national spite, or perhaps because England, in spite of all the errors of the last ten years, is still regarded by the Russian revolutionists as "the Holyland of Freedom." Happily, the British Consul himself had just left the place, being engaged in a gallant attempt to save the lives of a Jewish family by sheltering them in his own private residence. A formal apology was afterwards made by the Governor-General of the town, and the incident was officially declared "closed." But English people who are inclined to trust the forces of law and order rather than the Russian Liberals, for the protection of our consulates and our interests, should consider its

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significance. It was more shameless than the attack upon our Consul at Warsaw on January 31st of the same year, though it did not attract so much attention.

Throughout the winter, the sufferers who had been ruined by the Loyalist demonstration kept putting in claims for redress, which the Russian Government politely answered by assuring them that they were at perfect liberty to prosecute those who had done the damage in the usual law-courts. The day I arrived in Kieff, a very large number of Jews—said to be three hundred—were suddenly arrested at a religious service, no reason being given. Two days later they were suddenly released, no one knew why. These are but instances of the kind of justice which the revolutionists think they could improve upon without upsetting the foundations of society.

Also on the same day on which I arrived, a band of thirty-five revolutionists who had escaped from Moscow and had crept down the railway as far as this, with a view perhaps to escaping by way of Odessa or Poland, were arrested at the station. They disappeared, and it was universally assumed that they were shot at once, if only because the prisons were so horribly full that no one else could possibly be stowed into them. After the first railway strike in October, a deadly form of typhus, or gaol fever, broke out in the prisons. The relatives of the imprisoned railway men offered to nurse their

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own friends, and be responsible for them, if only they might be released from the plague-stricken gaols. But the request was refused, and the men left to rot. Next came the serious military rising of December, the chief demand of the soldiers being for more decent treatment from their officers. The mutiny was rapidly suppressed, and the published figures of the men who disappeared in consequence were given at ninety, but I discovered that among the officers themselves the acknowledged numbers were three hundred and eighty.

But beside its distinction for religion, intellect, and revolution, Kieff is also famous as the capital and market for the land of "Black Earth"—that great deposit of fertile soil which supplies wheat for England and most of Europe, and is the chief source of such little wealth as Russia possesses. In 1904, Russia's total exports were valued at £96,000,000. To this amount the foodstuffs contributed £61,400,000, and the value of exported grain alone was £49,530,000, of which England took £6,370,000. Next to grain in value came naphtha, which amounted only to £5,823,200, and, only a little below that, eggs. Rather more than half the total of Russia's exports, therefore, consists of grain, and this Black Earth is the granary of the country.

From Kieff I made a long journey by sledge to many villages about thirty or forty miles away.

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For a time the frost had broken up, though the Russian New Year had only just begun. Consequently the tracks were hardly passable for the rough wooden sledges that peasants use, and at one place where the snow was falling in great sheets, driven by the wind, so that the wide steppe showed no marks on its whiteness, and no division was to be seen between sky and land, our progress was very difficult for many hours. But we reached a village at last, and there, as in all the others I visited, I was surprised to find, not higher prosperity, but worse poverty than in the Great Russian villages I had seen. In one cottage, it is true, three dogs, two cows, a bristly pig, and a cat were all nestling against the stove in the entrance-room or ante-chamber. The dwelling-room also had one real iron bedstead, a chest of clothes, and a whole row of glittering icons. I hoped it was typical of the village, but I was wrong. It must have belonged to the village moneylender.

The other houses were rather singularly wretched. The very next was inhabited by a family who cultivated their own plot of land close around the cottage. The man had gone, like all the other men of the place, to wait his turn in the string of pleasure-seekers outside the Government vodka-shop and purchase the New Year's joy ; but the wife and three children were at home, all seated on the broad shelf which made the second-best bed. The other bed was a



A PEASANT'S HOME.



THE LAVRA AT KIEFF.

In Little Russia

warm space constructed on the top of the great brick stove itself. There was no covering of any kind on either bed, and, of course, no mattress ; nor was there any furniture in the room, not even a table, chair, or chest. The family had their meals on the bed, and the only decoration was a row of brown earthenware plates which the woman had stuck against a wall, just as though she had been dwelling in the Kensington of twenty years ago. "They look so red," she said, "red" being the common Russian word for bright or pretty or even splendid, as I noticed in the case of the Krasnaya Square in Moscow. As in all the villages of this district, the oven was heated only by straw, for coal is unheard of, and wood too expensive to buy. Only a few hours earlier I had driven through far the biggest pine forest I had then seen in Russia—great woods of spruce and Scotch fir. But all those forests belonged to the Tsar, and no peasant dared to touch a twig of them. To be found burning wood might cost a man his cottage and land. So the stove that keeps the family and cottage alive is heated with straw.

There are many reasons for the permanent poverty in this rich land—the taxes, the extortions of the moneylender, the ignorance of agriculture, the oppression of the petty officials. But the ultimate reason is that when serfdom was nominally abolished, and the land nominally distributed, forty years ago, there were far more peasants in proportion

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on the Black Earth than on the unfertile land of other parts, so that the grants were very small—so small that the greater fertility could not make up for the difference—and the price affixed to each grant was not merely too large, it was so overwhelming that the peasants were never able to wipe out the debt, and their payments in fact became a fixed rent to Government, and a much higher rent than in other districts.

So far, all around Kieff, the peasants had remained quiet. No country houses had been burnt or proprietors killed, though the usual superstition about the danger of venturing out into the country prevailed. The people, as I have said, are a sanguine and happy-tempered race, as Russians go. Regiments of soldiers had also been distributed among their villages as a further inducement for keeping the peace. In the little country town of Vasilikoff, among its low hills and wintry orchards, I found the Kieff dragoons, for instance, engaged in spreading contentment among the peasants by showing themselves human to the girls. As I watched them strolling about the filthy lanes of that remote and wintry place, prodding the rough cattle, criticizing the ponies in the street-market, or carrying away the steaming cauldrons of tea for rations, I remembered with a strange sense of distance that the English King was this regiment's honorary colonel.

CHAPTER XII

THE JEWS OF ODESSA

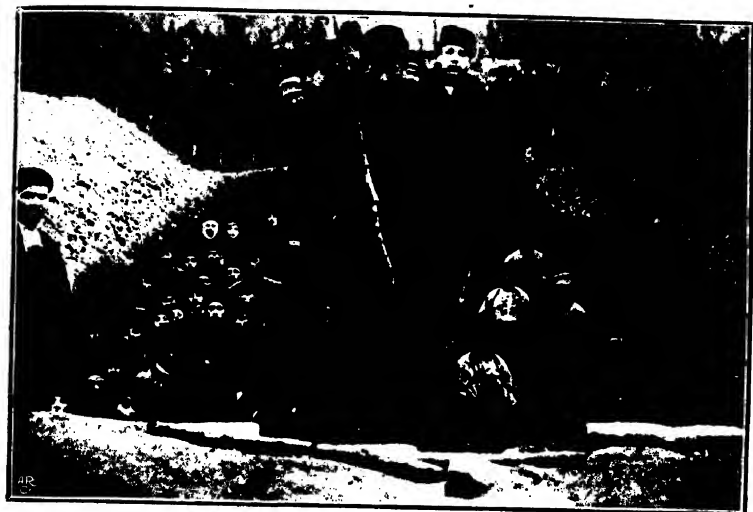
WHEN I reached Odessa, after travelling over the peculiarly desolate steppe from Kieff, only about eleven weeks had passed since she celebrated an amazing festival of liberty. Her straight streets had laughed for joy, and the old Black Sea had reflected the smile. Youths paraded with flags and trumpets, aged professors embraced in tears, and women, as on a Russian Easter Day, felt hurt if they were not kissed—all because the Tsar had issued a manifesto and freedom had risen into life. The long struggle was surely near its end, and those who had fallen for the cause had not died in vain.

Two days later they buried freedom, and whilst I was there the Government was still busy stamping down the bloody earth to lay her ghost. There was no longer any talk of manifesto or concession. Every promise had been falsified, and every hope deceived. No meetings were allowed, except to legal Hooligans. No papers could appear, except the Government organ of violence. Even the paper

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of the Constitutional Democrats had been suddenly suppressed. The friends of liberty choked the prisons, and as I went down the streets I saw their white faces peering between the bars. All was still, except when the stagnation of tyranny was broken by the murder of some police-officer conspicuous for brutality, or by a bomb such as had just fallen into the Café Liebmann on the central square by the cathedral. No schools had been open since October, and there seemed no prospect of the University ever opening again.

Trepoff began it when he sent an order from St. Petersburg urging the Governor-General Neidhart to allow a demonstration of the loyalist Black Hundred on November 1st. Infuriated by religious conviction and the lust for stolen goods, the Black Hundred exhibited an enthusiastic loyalty, unchecked by the police, who directed their movements, or by the troops, who were confined to barracks. For three days the city lay at the mercy of law and order, and in the cemetery may be seen the oblong of loose earth where 350 bodies were heaped into a common grave. The Government's victory was complete and so far-reaching that memorials of it might still be seen on every side. Even in the middle of the town, shops that had been the richest had the shutters up in January, their windows were broken to pieces, their stores all gone. And in the northern and north-west districts, where the Jews



THE JEWS' GRAVE AT ODESSA.



AFTER THE MASSACRE.

The Jews of Odessa

and some workpeople live, whole rows of houses stood desolate. The marks of bullets were thick upon the walls. The empty sockets of the windows were roughly boarded over. The roofs had been broken in or sometimes burnt away, and even on the main streets people pointed out the windows, three storeys high, from which babies, girls, and women had been pitched sheer upon the stony pavement below.

It was in the miserable lanes of this north-west district that the plunder and slaughtering began—a district so wretched that my top-boots kept sticking in the deep slough of the streets, and the worst Jewish slum off Commercial Road would have seemed in comparison a County Council paradise. But passing beyond this quarter, I crossed a deep watercourse, and came out upon the kind of land which serves for country at the backdoor of Odessa. It is part of the wild and almost uninhabited steppe which stretches for mile on mile round the basin of the Dniester and far away into Bessarabia—an uninterrupted, water-worn plain, like the Orange River veldt, but streaked at that time with melting snow. On the edge of this steppe stands a semi-detached town or large village, called Slobodka Romanovka, conspicuous for its madhouse and its hospital. Providence itself must have ordained the site of these buildings, for nowhere else upon earth's surface could they have been more wanted. And, indeed,

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it was the Chosen People of Providence who wanted them most, for none of the rabid Christians who there hunted them down were afterwards confined in the asylum for mania.

The village numbered about 26,000 souls, and there was hardly a house which did not still show the marks of wrecking and murder. Clubs were the weapons chiefly used by the champions of Christ and the Tsar—such clubs as the Turks used in Constantinople when they brained the Armenians in the name of the Prophet and the Sultan. But long butcher knives were found even more convenient for killing children, and when there was the least show of resistance, nothing could be more serviceable than a revolver at five yards' range. In that three days' massacre nearly all who suffered were Jews, and out of a population of about 600,000 in Odessa, the Jews are estimated at a little under or a little over 300,000, so that the game for the Christian sportsmen lay thick upon the ground.

The Jews of Odessa are said by their Christian neighbours—even by such as restrained themselves from putting them to death—to represent a particularly unpleasant type. They are accused of peculiar selfishness, greediness, and indifference to suffering, even to their own. I cannot say for certain whether that is so. I only know that they have a particularly unpleasant time, and, whether indifferent to their

The Jews of Odessa

own sufferings or not, they are an amazing people. Their Christian neighbours, as in Kieff and all centres of Jewish persecution, chalk a conspicuous cross on their shutters in dangerous times, or stick a sixpenny saint's portrait over the door. Most people also, as I noticed in Moscow, wear big crosses hidden round their necks, so that, when the supporters of the Government are out cutting throats, they may have some chance of salvation. No Jew would do any such thing—not for dear life itself would he do it. Christians say he could not conceal himself, even if he wished—his look, his dwelling, his passport, the police, all would betray him. And no doubt that is true, though, if I were a Jew, I would cover my house with crosses from ground to roof in the hope of saving any one I cared for from being flung out of my top window. But, even if such hope were vain, that is no reason why a Jew should cover his outside shutters and the lintel of his door with Hebrew inscriptions or Hebrew information about his Kosher goods and the Shomer who is in attendance. Yet on ruin after ruin I saw these inscriptions written; and, what is more remarkable, I saw the surviving owners repainting these inscriptions as they patched up the wreckage of their homes.

They are not, perhaps, exactly the race I should call chosen, but certainly they are a peculiar people. I saw, for instance, one aged type of wretched Israel

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who had been counted a prosperous man, but in the massacre had lost wife, family, ducats, and all. When his seed was buried and the days of the mourning passed, he borrowed a few cigarettes, and sat down on the pavement outside the wilderness of his habitation. Next day he had more cigarettes to sell. Next week he had a stall, and when I saw him he was hoping to open a tobacconist shop where before he sold secondhand clothes and saw his family murdered. It seems impossible that all the Christians in Russia, backed as they are by the open support of the army, police, and Church, can ever succeed in exterminating such a race.

But for the time their misery was extreme. They had crowded for refuge into courts which ran far back from the ordinary streets—something like the old “rents” in Holborn. There I found them living in stinking and steaming rooms or cellars, and often I had to grow accustomed to the darkness before I could discern exactly how many families were accommodated in the corners. The assistant of one of the University professors was my guide, for a certain amount of relief work was being carried on by such Liberals as happened to be still out of gaol. I was told the town had already spent £15,000 in relief, and the Zemstvo had voted as much again to keep the distressed alive till the end of April. I dimly heard, also, of a fund contributed by Jews in England, but I did not discover their methods. As

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to the town fund, I could not be certain how much of it reached the Jews, but some did, for with an agent I visited one of the ten "sanitary districts" into which the town had been divided, and saw how he dealt with the cases.

Money had been given at first, but, as usual, imposture came, and the professors had found themselves no match for a race whose whole weekday existence is devoted to gathering where they have not strown. Later on, the town bound itself only to feed the destitute by a system of free tickets, or at a very small charge. It was the ordinary soup-kitchen method—not scientific, not inhumanly discriminating; but Russia has the happiness of being young in philanthropy, as in politics, and has not yet developed the caution of our charity societies, which in their strained quality are so little like mercy. As was to be expected, crowds of the unemployed came wandering in from other towns, even as far away as Kharkoff and Kieff, and under the passport system most of them were routed out and sent back again. What was worse, some 15,000 men and women had lately been turned upon the streets because the rich people of Odessa, who live in the pleasant quarter by the cliffs overlooking the sea, began to run for their lives that day in June when the mutinous warship *Potemkin* made them all jump by throwing two shells into the town near the

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cathedral ; and they had been running ever since. Behind them they left all that host of valets, cooks, nurses, housemaids, grooms, coachmen, gardeners, boot-boys, barbers, and washerwomen who depend on the rich for existence, just as the rich depend on them. The shopkeepers who sell the things that only rich people can buy suffered equally, and many of their assistants were dismissed. It is bad for all when, according to the old parable, the members refuse to feed the belly, and it is worse when the belly runs away from the members. But if any one supposes on that account that the expenditure of the rich confers an inestimable benefit upon the working classes, he is involved in a very comfortable old fallacy.

Beside all this, there was great distress among the dockers, in spite of the considerable share of Jewish wealth which they had obtained in their outburst of religious and patriotic zeal. Most of it went in an immense drinking debauch to celebrate the victory over the enemies of Christ, and work had ceased because the great fire during the mutiny in June destroyed a great part of the docks, and entirely burnt away the wooden viaduct upon which the dock railway runs along the whole face of the port. One day when I was there, trial trains began to run for the first time, amid such popular excitement that I hoped another mutiny had broken out. But no warships were any longer stationed in the

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port, except one little destroyer. The dockers were only excited at the prospect of regular work. They live by themselves at the foot of the cliffs, below the fashionable boulevard, and they are said to be in every way a race apart. Certainly they adopt a distinctive costume, more astonishing in its incongruity than a West Coast chief's, and suggesting a burlesque air of intentional raggedness, like an amateur who wants to look Bohemian. The dockers, however, have no need for deliberation in picturesque poverty, for the average wages of unskilled labour through the city is 1s. 8d. for a day of ten hours, or 2d. an hour. And it is not as though 2d. in Russia went as far as the "honest tanner" for which our own dockers struggled so hard in the early nineties. Ordinary living is very expensive in Odessa, more expensive even than in most Russian cities, and in an earlier chapter I noticed how strangely high the cost of living is in St. Petersburg and Moscow, chiefly owing to the heavy rent charges, in spite of the vast extent of untilled and unoccupied land in the Empire. Except for the hire of street sledges and little open cabs, two shillings in Russia do not go much further than one in London, nor twopence to an Odessa docker much further than a penny in Poplar. No one can dress very sumptuously when he has to feed himself and family on a penny an hour, and we cannot wonder that the unskilled join the party of law and order, in

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the hope that an occasional massacre will bring a change of clothes.

In politics, Odessa included all the Russian parties, from the rival pioneers of Social Revolution and Social Democracy (most of whom were in gaol) down to the "Russian Order," or party of violence, which is the Government's ready instrument for the destruction of Jews, Poles, Liberals, and other heretics. The Russian Order alone was still allowed to hold meetings, every other party organization being forbidden by the police. But, nevertheless, it was in Odessa that I first became intimate with the Constitutional Democratic party, which has since grown to such importance as a possible instrument for reform. They were especially strong in the University, which justly prides itself on its political fearlessness. Their newspapers and all meetings had been suppressed; but most of the Professors and other leaders were still at large, though daily awaiting arrest, with enviable unconcern.

They were energetically preparing the first grade of elections for the Duma, and they expected to secure a majority upon the body, who in turn would select the single representative appointed for the great city in the Duma. Like other Progressive parties, they demanded a Constituent Assembly under the four-headed suffrage (universal, direct, secret, and equal). Their programme included Home Rule for the various nationalities of the

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Empire, labour legislation, and a sweeping agrarian reform on the basis of compensation for private land, but not for the Crown lands held by the Imperial family. In fact, their immediate objects, as the Professors admitted, were hardly to be distinguished from the "minimum programme" of the Social Democrats. But when we began to talk about "immediate objects" and "minimum programmes," I remembered that seven weeks had gone by since such conversations seemed natural—seven weeks of bloodshed and suppression and bitter change. They themselves took the mournful difference very calmly. The fight was still in front of them, every hope had been crushed, every effort for freedom would have to begin again from the very start. But nothing discouraged them; the mere struggle was worth the pains; and to this patient people even the bitterest and most cruel experience never ceases to work hope.

But, after all, the Jewish question is the centre of political interest in Odessa, and, in spite of all suppression, the Jewish "Bund" is likely to remain the most powerful progressive organization as long as the Jews continue subject to their hereditary wrongs. Under laws which were called temporary, but have continued unrepealed for fifty years, no Jew may buy land or rent it. He may not live out in the country, and only in certain quarters of the towns. He may not be a schoolmaster or professor.

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He may not teach in private Christian families. He may not be educated at a high school (gymnasium) or at a University, except at a very low percentage of the whole number of students. Usually it is not higher than three to five per cent., though in Odessa the Professors, being exceptionally Liberal, had on their own authority extended the number to ten per cent., and were on the point of declaring the University open on level terms to Jew and Christian alike, when the University was suddenly shut on level terms to all. A Jew may not sit on the Zemstvo or Town Council; he may not be an officer in the army or navy; he may hold no State appointment; and he must not move from place to place without special permission and a special form of passport, like the prostitutes. Jews are not by nature a revolutionary people. The rigid Conservatism of their customs and ritual, as well as their intense pre-occupation in material gain, deters them from violence and change. Their peculiar dangers lie in exactly the opposite direction—in disregard of the large issues before mankind, and in a narrow devotion to antiquated ideals. But we cannot wonder that in Odessa, as in Russia generally, they are revolutionists almost to a man, and that to the ordinary Russian official or soldier a Jew of the "Bund" is identical with the "Anarchist"—a creature to be shot as quickly as convenient. When I was in Odessa I first heard how the new Aliens

The Jews of Odessa

Act was being put into operation in England, and as I read of Jewish refugees cast back from the ancient protection of our country to the misery and bloodshed from which they believed they had escaped, I thought of these things.

CHAPTER XIII

LIBERTY IN PRISON

IN St. Petersburg the successors of the original Strike Committee had declared the general strike at an end, on January 1st. The thing had not been a success. Either because the leaders were in prison, or that the workpeople were harassed by the frequent repetition of strikes when funds were low, only about 20,000 remained away from work, and most of these were locked-out by the employers. Outwardly, the city continued quiet, in spite of the deep indignation excited by the arrest of all the popular leaders and editors, and afterwards by the murder of a musical student named Davidoff, who was shot by Okounoff, an officer of the Guards, for keeping one foot on a chair while the National Anthem was being played in a restaurant on the Russian New Year's Eve (January 13th).

Then came the first anniversary of Vladimir's Day or Bloody Sunday (January 22nd). The city was filled with troops. All the previous night cavalry patrols went up and down the streets, and on going into the large courtyards, round which most of the

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dwelling-houses are arranged, I found many of them full of soldiers, sitting round fires with piled arms. Guns were concealed at convenient points, and all preparations laid for repeating the massacre of the previous year. But the Strike Committee had issued an appeal calling upon the workmen to observe the day only by quitting the factories, staying at home, and drawing down the blinds ;* and though, in answer to this, the masters placarded a notice threatening with dismissal any one who remained away

* The following is the text of this appeal :—"The anniversary of the 9th (22nd) of January, 1905, lies immediately before us. Russia has not forgotten that day, and will never forget it. The memory of those who in the streets of the capital were attacked by the hosts of violence, and sacrificed their lives to their confidence in our rulers, their faith in the possibility of influencing them by peaceful means—the memory of these martyrs is engraved upon the hearts of the Russian people in words of sorrow and rage.

"Citizens of St. Petersburg ! We appeal to you to honour a memory like theirs ! We appeal to you to celebrate the first anniversary of that dark day ! Henceforward let the 9th of January be a day of universal mourning among us. To honour the memory of those who fell for the people's freedom, let all citizens abstain from their ordinary work. For this day let the toil of our city's life be laid aside, so that a peaceful stillness may serve as the symbol of our general sorrow. On this day let not our mourning be broken by customary pleasures. On the day of the people's sorrow what have we to do with song and art ? Citizens, we call on you not only to avoid places of entertainment, but not to visit the banks or other public institutions. Draw down your blinds, and in the evening hang curtains before your windows, so that no light may be cast upon the streets from the houses. Let the day consecrated to the martyrs of January 9th be kept as a day of absolute silence, a day of deep and universal mourning, a day for sad and angry remembrance of all the victims which have been torn from our midst by the enemies of the people's freedom."

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from work, the Strike Committee still had power enough to ordain a passive resistance.

All the morning of the day—it was a Monday—I was down the Schlüsselburg Road, where a disturbance was most likely to occur; but, on the surface, everything was still. The steam-trams carried soldiers with fixed bayonets as a guard, but otherwise the troops were kept rather carefully out of sight. Wherever the police saw blinds down, or other signs of mourning, even in the main streets of the city, they entered with their revolvers, and sometimes a little knot of spectators gathered, but there was no appearance of organized resistance or demonstration at all. The sun shone, but it was intensely cold. Upon the Neva, a few people were crossing with loaded sledges, a few on foot were following the fir branches that marked the paths. Women were washing clothes by letting them down through square holes they had cut in the ice, and then beating them with wooden slats. Men were sinking bag-nets through the ice for fish. Otherwise there was hardly a sign of life. Nearly all the mills were closed, and those that pretended to continue work were held by a strong military guard, with sentries before the gates. No throngs of excited workpeople now moved along the footways or stood at street corners. In one or two of the churches, a memorial service was being held for the dead, but for the most part the priests refused to open their churches for

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the purpose, and the work-people observed a nobler celebration by remaining at home in their darkened rooms.

While visiting a great naval ironworks, closed, like most Government things, for want of cash, I heard from one of the chief engineers an enlightening instance of the Russian Government's methods in conducting foreign warfare. For the Japanese War, the works had turned out many large guns, fitted with telescopic sights. When the engineers offered to teach the officers the use of these sights, their offer was scornfully refused, and the Government allowed the guns to be dispatched to the war without a man who understood them. So complete was the ignorance, that the cleaners covered the sights, glasses and all, with vaseline, and, from first to last, no advantage was taken of the invention. Yet these are the people who talked of the Japanese as "yellow monkeys," sure to scuttle into the sea at the first sound of a Russian gun. And, what is worse, these are the people who have dictated England's foreign policy for over half a century. Even the Social Democrats, who make no pretence to military knowledge or ambition, could hardly defend their country's interests worse.

During the late afternoon, and far into the night, I was driving through the workmen's quarters upon the Petersburg Island and other districts north of the main river. All the streets were

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hushed and empty. Where, as a rule, the pavements are crowded with men and women going home or shopping for next day, a stillness like death reigned now. Even when the hands from some working factory came out between the lines of pickets watching the gates, they hurried fast home, and in a few minutes all was silent again. Perhaps the Tsar and his minister congratulated each other that order was restored, and the corpse of freedom lay quiet at last. They did not consider that the very silence was an evidence of the revolution's continued power—a proof that the committee which had defied them could still count on the working-people's loyalty to its desire.

In the first and, I believe, the only number of one of the many satiric papers which had lately been suppressed in St. Petersburg, a cartoon represented the Government as a hideous vampire gloating over the body of a young girl in Russian costume. "I think she's quiet at last," says the monster with satisfaction, but still a little dubiously. That picture exactly expressed the situation at the time of my return to St. Petersburg. Was the sucked and tortured body of freedom really quiet at last? The vampire was anxious and dubious. But it certainly looked as though she were dead; at all events, she lay very still.

All my former friends were in prison now.



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"I THINK SHE'S QUIET AT LAST!"

From the *Vampire*.

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One after another I called upon those who had welcomed me so joyfully before, when the world was bright with hope ; and one house-porter after another told me they had gone away for a few days, and it would be useless to leave any message. We soon learn the meaning of that formula in Russia. It means that the police have come, probably in the middle of the night, have routed up the man or woman, seized all papers, money, and anything else useful, and driven their victim away in the darkness to some "House of Inquiry" on suspicion of holding the same kind of political views as the majority of English people. In the House of Inquiry the suspect is generally kept from four to six months, while his spirit is being broken down and evidence raked together against him. He may then be brought up for trial before a judge and sentenced to two years', five years', or ten years' imprisonment or exile, according to the state of the judge's political opinions or digestion. He may also be condemned by "administrative order," without coming before a tribunal at all. I believe no "political" has been tried in open court before a jury since Vera Sassoulitch was acquitted for the attempted assassination of the elder Trepoff in 1878. No Russian jury can ever be trusted to condemn. But the Russian suspect has two advantages still—he may be thrown out of prison as unexpectedly as he was thrown in, and with as

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little reason given. · He may also call upon any one he pleases, not necessarily a barrister, to take up his defence, if he is brought before a tribunal. He may thus obtain the satisfaction of having his case defended on the broad lines of human reason and obvious justice, instead of listening to some professional pleader, stultified by legal training, while he struggles to elude condemnation on a verbal error or by some uninspiring precedent in commercial fraud. It is very seldom, however, that the most convincing defence makes the least difference to the sentence, for that has been decided beforehand.

A day or two after my return to St. Petersburg, I was shown a letter from a friend who had been locked up in a House of Inquiry for speaking at Liberal meetings and for feeding the children of work-people during the second general strike. He had sometimes written, also, for a Progressive newspaper, and it must be remembered that the Tsar's Manifesto of October 30th had granted freedom of the press as well as freedom of public meeting. Yet the suspicion of these three crimes was sufficient to show that he must be put out of the way like a mad dog. The letter was written on three sides, and each side marked by a broad yellow cross drawn diagonally from corner to corner as a proof that the prison authorities had read it. Yellow seems to be the favourite official colour in Russia, as I noticed before

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in the case of the "yellow ticket." or passport which binds the prostitutes almost hopelessly to their way of life ; and the yellow cross, signifying the gaoler's approval of the contents, shows that the prisoner did not in any way exaggerate his condition. The letter was written simply for the information of another friend who had hitherto escaped the common martyrdom which rewards all lovers of freedom in Russia. I translate a part of it :—

"My cell is five paces long by two wide. It has a window, the bottom of which is just above the level of my eyes, so that I can't look out. There is a bed, a chair, and a table, all of iron and fastened with clamps to the wall. In the daytime the cell is fairly light, and the electricity is turned on from eight to nine in the evening.

"At six I get up. At half-past six a hand is thrust through 'the eye' (spy-hole) in the door with some black bread. At seven a different hand pours boiling water into my jug in the same way. I have to buy my own tea. At ten I am led through the corridor into a little court, where I am allowed to walk round and round for twenty-five minutes with other 'politicals.' But if we speak or look at each other or say 'good-morning,' the walk is stopped—and it is my only chance of getting a breath of air. At eleven a bell rings, and the 'eye' is opened for letters or any orders for purchases that I want to send. But I am allowed to order things only four times a week, and, of course, only as long as my money lasts. At the same time a hand pours in boiling water again for tea. From half-past eleven till twelve is dinner-time, and I get a biggish basin of watery barley soup or pea soup, or else a thin fluid with scraps of meat and cabbage floating in it.

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“There is rather a good prison library, especially strong in political economy. But it is very hard to get the books I want, and the pages are defaced by the gaolers, who always think the dots and hyphens are signals from the prisoners to each other. In the afternoon, especially when it gets dark, I lie on my bed, or walk up and down the cell, till at eight o'clock, as I said, the electric light is turned on for an hour. About six I get the boiling water and soup again. Sometimes letters reach me, but they are always kept till they are old. Sometimes I am allowed a visit of three minutes' conversation through the 'eye' in the door. Of course, the gaoler is always within hearing.”

The treatment is not worse, it is perhaps rather better than the peculiarly brutalizing treatment of prisoners in England. There is something distinctly paternal in the provision of a library especially strong in political economy. But it must be remembered that this friend of mine had never been accused, had never been tried, and was only suspected of a crime which all the Liberals of England, from the Prime Minister downwards, commit every waking hour of their lives amid the applause of our nation ; unless, indeed, it be urged against him that he fed the children of strikers—an offence from which our official Liberals are often exempt.

The particular prison in which this man was confined, was, as I said, a House of Inquiry, but the number of arrests had been so enormous since the Moscow rising that the suspects were now being thrust into the ordinary prisons straight away, or

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into any hole where they could be kept tied up. Just across the breadth of river from the Winter Palace of the Tsars, and the dilettante picture-gallery of the Hermitage, glitters the long-drawn brazen spire which marks the old fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, the citadel and grave of Peter the Great. Encased in monotonous marble slabs, and surrounded by hideous emblems of death and glory, there lie the bodies of all those melancholy tyrants from Peter downwards. Perhaps there are some people still left among the royal family who sincerely reckon those dull tombs among Russia's treasures ; but close beside the church along the Neva, so low that some of the cells are beneath the river level, run the dungeons which form the true Martyrs' Memorial of the country—the places that will some day be honoured like the graves of the saints, for they are consecrated by the blood and suffering of hundreds of men and women who fought for freedom, though they seemed to fight in vain. This was the prison where again the foremost champions of freedom were now cooped up. Khroustoloff was there, the man of genius who organized the first general strike and was the chairman of the Workmen's Council when I used to attend their sittings two months before. Not long after my return, the rumour went that he had been shot in the prison yard. Nothing was known for certain, but the thing was only too likely, for a tyranny does not

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spare its finest enemies, and Khroustoloff will be known to all Russian history as the man who forced the Government to defend itself by that lying Manifesto with which it betrayed the people as with a kiss.

Just outside the fortress the Tsar is building a palace for his former mistress—a Polish dancing girl, said to have been attractive without beauty—and less than a mile further up the river on the same bank, stands the large modern prison called the Cross (Kresty), whether from its shape or as an emblem of salvation, is uncertain. It is a dreary, red-brick building of the ordinary type, like Wormwood Scrubbs, and the officials hang their windows with caged birds as ornaments in keeping with the architecture. That prison also was crammed with “politicals.” In fact, it was the same story in all the prisons of Russia—the same thing as I had seen in Moscow, Kieff, and Odessa. Somehow room had to be found in the gaols for 20,000 Liberals—that was the lowest estimate I heard at the time, and a few weeks afterwards the moderate estimate rose to 70,000, and a high estimate of 100,000 was commonly accepted. We cannot wonder that a bankrupt Government felt only too delighted when it could kill off its prisoners by batches of thirty-five together as in Moscow, or of forty-five together as happened at Fellin in Esthonia just after Vladimir’s Day, when that number of journalists and men of letters

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were collected there and shot in bloody comradeship. The dead are so cheap in their subterranean cells.

English people are constantly marvelling, with some superiority in their tone, why it is that the Russian revolution has brought to light no man of commanding genius—"no Cromwell," that is their usual phrase—to direct its energies to victory. Let them search the dungeons and the graves. Perhaps they may find a Cromwell there.

Till quite lately the very noblest of the "politicals" would naturally have been sent to the Schlüsselburg—the old fortress-prison standing on an island where the Ladoga Lake pours out the great stream of the Neva some forty miles above the city. But three days before the anniversary of Bloody Sunday, a ukase was issued converting that ancient dungeon into a mint, and removing the few prisoners who still remained. I believe there were only five of them—old men and, perhaps, women who had tried to do something for freedom once, and in their living graves had already become myths of the dreadful past. About their identification and their removal to other dungeons there was much mystery, and the rumour ran that two of them had strangely disappeared, as well as others whose fading names and records were recalled by memories growing obscure.

• To such mysteries another mystery now

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succeeded ; for every one, except the few who clung to the orthodox photographic faith about the inexhaustible ingots of the Russian treasury, was marvelling why the terrible fortress had been converted into a mint, of all things, and whence the bullion was to come for coinage there. I am inclined to think that the Government was misled, like most people, by treacherous parallels from history, and, knowing the Schlüsselburg's evil name, had feared a second Fall of the Bastille. It was a needless anxiety. The Schlüsselburg is too far away for popular frenzy ; but the Peter-Paul fortress is close at hand and its abominations grow.

In any case, the conversion of a bloodstained fortress into an empty coin chest made no difference to the situation. The reaction went trampling along its course, and under it the country lay paralyzed. During the four weeks after the collapse of the Moscow rising (January 7th to February 7th), 78 newspapers were suspended, 58 editors imprisoned, 2,000 post and telegraph assistants dismissed, over 20 workmen's restaurants closed in St. Petersburg to prevent relief to the unemployed, a state of siege was declared in 62 towns, a minor state of siege in 34 towns, 17 temporary prisons were opened, 1,716 "politicals" were imprisoned in St. Petersburg alone, and 1,400 "politicals" were summarily executed under martial law, not including the large and uncertain numbers that were put to

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death in Moscow after law and order had been re-established.*

Such was the terrified blood-thirstiness of that unhappy little body of men called the Committee of Ministers, who went down to Tsarskoe Selo by a guarded train along a guarded line nearly every day to discuss how best they could stifle down the hopes of liberty, and retain for themselves and their narrow circle of friends or patrons the cash, the medals, the jobbery, the social distinction, the female affection, and all the many other delights of power. They did not number more than eight or ten poor mortals, not removed by many years from the abyss of death, and, from all I hear, only two or three of them had been born more brutal or scoundrelly of nature than ordinary rulers are. One would have liked to listen to their conversation in those trains, as, with unctuous regret for the stern necessity laid upon them, they decided how many more should die. Some, like distracted Witte, whom we have heard blubbering over the wickedness of the dear children he was compelled to butcher; or like Count Dmitri Tolstoy, the Minister of Education, formerly President of the Academy of Artists; or like Shipoff, Minister of Finance to the penniless State, who only a year before had voted for universal suffrage; or like Nemeschaeff, Minister of Communications, who had been a chef to a railway,

Figures from the *Times* of February 24, 1906.

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almost as good as a workman, and also had voted for universal suffrage ; or like Birileff, Minister of Marine, who among Russian officers passed for a type of incredible integrity because he had abstained from swindling his country when he had the power ; or like Rediger, the incapable but comparatively honest Minister of War—all these had once enjoyed a pleasing reputation for Liberalism, as had Prince Obolensky, the new Procurator of the Holy Synod, and successor to Pobiedonostseff as keeper of Russia's orthodoxy. At one time probably nearly all of them had received the compliment of being thought a little dangerous by their relations, and now, under the ancient curse of tyrants, they were consumed by the knowledge of the virtue they had left behind. But they could not turn back—they had entered upon a road with iron walls. For guide to the entrance of that road they had deliberately chosen Durnovo, the new Privy Councillor, lately made permanent in his Ministry of Interior. And beside Durnovo stood his uneducated relation Akinoff, new-appointed Minister of Justice.

Thus was the Committee of Ministers helplessly committed to preserve in wealth and power that handful of useless human beings who may be called the Tsardom or the Government or the ruling classes—the same kind of men who for generations past have brought all that long tale of poverty,

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ignorance, and bloodshed upon the Russian people. Nothing could save them from the fatality of their own choice. They were forced to go on with it now, driven day by day a few steps further along the inevitable road. So day by day they gave their orders to General Diedulin, the new Chief of Police and Durnovo's assistant at the Interior, and day by day the noblest and most thoughtful men and women of Russia were shot, imprisoned, or dragged away to the oblivion of Siberia.

I know that in England one of the pleasant myths circulated by the Tsar's hirelings, or sanctionious patrons, is that Siberian exile has been abolished. It is as untrue as the similar myth about flogging the peasants for taxes. In St. Petersburg on January 26th, I met a lady whose brother, a conspicuous barrister in a large city of Central Russia, had just been exiled to Siberia for five years because he took the chair at a public meeting. Like so many other confiding people, he was fool enough to trust to a Tsar's Manifesto, and now as a reward for his simple faith, cut off from his friends, his family, and his career, he is moving by stages from prison to prison towards the dreary spot where the best years of life must be spent, even if he ever returns. It would, indeed, be unthrifty of the Government, when they have crammed the Russian prisons to bursting point, not to take advantage of the Siberian system

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so providentially organized by their predecessors in office.

On the whole horizon of St. Petersburg life only one sign of hope appeared. In the lecture theatre of the Mokhovaya, leading out of the Nevsky, where the educated revolutionists of the middle classes are accustomed to hold their meetings, a quiet body of men used to assemble every afternoon, with a few quiet men and women to listen. They were the Constitutional Democrats, whose meetings Witte had been compelled, not to permit, but to ignore, because in case of refusal they threatened to remove into Finland, and it was not so easy to spy upon them there. Delegates had arrived from all parts of the Empire—Mohammedan Tartars from Kazan, Armenians from the Caucasus, heathen Mongols from the uttermost parts of the East, speaking no human tongue, nor to be understood by any, had not old Professor Clementz been discovered still alive among his specimens of anthropology. Banished in his prime to the extremity of Mongolia in the hope that he might die of savagery and cold, he had dwelt so many years among the heathen that in face and language he could hardly be distinguished from them, and now they found in him their friend, the one man in the city to whom their monosyllabic squeaks and sounds conveyed a human meaning.

So the delegates met, and listened and debated,

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discussing the tactics to be employed if ever time should overtake the promised Duma, which continually receded. What was the right course for men who hoped nothing from violence and yet would fight for freedom ; men who distrusted haste, believed in law, and yet aimed at revolution ? Being concerned with subjects so far-reaching, their debates were naturally more abstract than is usual among hardened old Parliamentarians like ourselves, to whom "the middle of next week" expresses an unimaginable and negligible distance of time. But they boasted themselves practical as Russian parties go, and at all events they were not hampered, as our Liberals usually are, by class tradition and social influence. I mean, for instance, they would never endure anything so ludicrous as a House of Lords in their constitution, and if they should ever come to real power, they would enjoy the very unusual advantage of a clear field. But their immediate object was to form a strong block of opposition to the representatives of the six reactionary parties with which the Government designed to flood the Duma when the elections came—such parties as the Octobrists, or nominal supporters of the Manifesto ; the party of "Legal Order," or Law and Order, as we say ; and the party of Industry and Commerce.

Beside the platform at their meetings stood a large death-bed portrait of Sergius Troubetskoy, the Rector of Moscow University, who had suddenly

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died in the previous September while pleading for freedom of speech, as I mentioned in the Introduction. Across the portrait was written the inscription, "The Champion of Freedom," and the spirit of the great Zemstvoist leader might well be said to direct the methods and purposes of the assembly. Among the living leaders present were Petrunkevitch, who had succeeded to Troubetskoy's position upon the Moscow Zemstvo ; Struve, long the exiled editor of the Russian paper, *Emancipation* (*Osvobojdenie*) in Paris ; and Miliukoff, so well known in France through David Soskice's translation of his book on Russian culture, and in England and America through his own Chicago lectures upon *Russia and its Crisis*. He almost alone among all the Russians I met in St. Petersburg at that time still retained the power of hope and enthusiasm undiminished, in spite of all the disasters of the past seven weeks.

"The reaction," he said to me, "cannot last very long. The Moscow rising was a great mistake, and at the end of it I too almost despaired. I thought all the educated people and the well-to-do would be permanently set against change. But the Government's violence has kept them on our side. The "classes" are as much sickened by the slaughter as other people. They have learnt that it is the Government, and not the revolutionists, who are the party of destruction and disorder. Reaction? Why, it is already over. The spirit of the thing is dead."

Coming at such a time, such words were

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startling in their confidence. But then Professor Miliukoff is one of those few happy people who have carried with them the glories of youth into middle age, and there is no glory of youth more enviable than the wisdom which, as the Preacher said, is the mother of holy hope.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PRIEST AND THE PEOPLE

THE shallows of the Gulf of Finland were frozen hard, and from a distance the sea looked like a huge flat plain covered with snow, while wind and grey storms of drift raged over it, blotting out the horizon. But when, almost imperceptibly, the sledge quitted the flat land for the flat sea, the green ice sometimes lay bare upon the surface, or threw up a sharp green edge, and sometimes the hollow rumble of the runners told of the deeper water beneath. At one place a few planks had been thrown across a gaping crack, where the current or the pressure of ice had split the great field, and a dark line of water stretched away on either hand till it was lost to sight in the storm. The track was marked by the usual Christmas trees stuck in the ice, and by tall signal posts as well. Yet, as the wind and driving snow increased, it was impossible to see from one mark to the next, and the horse felt his way along, like a man moving from lamp-post to lamp-post in a London fog. Sometimes another sledge suddenly appeared out of limbo two or three yards in front. At three points

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small wooden huts had been erected as shelters for the lost or frozen. Huge lanterns on poles glimmered through the dark flakes. Driven by the rushing wind, wheels with wooden sails tugged at ropes, and out of the obscurity a deep bell sounded, ominous as the bells rung by the waves around our cliffs. For the dangerous tempest was blowing, which, I believe, the natives call the "Vouga."

On a sudden a shadowy rampart was seen, a bank of storm-twisted trees, a dimly discerned church, and so we came to the island of Kronstadt, famed for its fortress, its mutiny, and its living saint.

It was to visit the frozen sea and the miracle-working saint that I had come, and of the few passers-by who struggled against the snow I asked for Father John. At first I feared that the saint's European fame had hardly yet reached Kronstadt, where he lives, and from which he takes his title. But after a time we were directed to a largish modern house, which he has fitted up as a refuge, partly, I think, for the poor, partly for the sick, or other unhappy people, who stand in need of miracles. The rooms inside are large and very clean, all filled with narrow iron bedsteads, covered with brown-grey blankets, as in our barracks or superior doss-houses. A notice on the door gave the price of a bed for the night at thirty kopecks—say sevenpence halfpenny. That is about threepence halfpenny

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higher than the average London doss, but it seems fair that those who seek a miracle should pay something extra for it, and the tariff in our common lodging-houses is not inclusive.

I had not time to make further observations when I was seized by an eager crowd of women who thronged the rooms and passages—peasant women from the mainland and work-people from the dockyards, all muffled up in shawls and hoods and blankets. Excited benevolence shone in their faces, as with cries and exhortations they clutched my clothing and hurried me through one large dormitory, which appeared to be a lying-in ward, into another where the crowd was thicker still. Being thrust eagerly among the worshippers—for there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth—I perceived a small altar beneath a large and brilliant icon hanging on the wall. The altar was made of a deal table with a white cloth over it, and on the cloth stood a large enamelled-iron soup-tureen. It was white with a blue edge, and filled with a yellowish liquid, which I supposed to be holy. In front of the altar, with his back towards us, stood a short, grey-haired figure, in a robe of black flowered damask or brocade, with a crimson border round the neck and halfway down the back.

He was just raising his hands in some act of adoration, when, becoming aware of the religious tumult of my entrance, he faced smartly round,

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abandoned the altar, and came, as it were, bounding in my direction. Uncertain how to receive him, I stood my ground and held out my hand ; but entirely disregarding that, he sprang upon me, and raising himself lightly upon his toes—for the top of his head did not reach to my chin—with uplifted arm he began fumbling about in my hair with his fingers. It was so sudden. In five seconds I had received his blessing. He had blessed me by assault. For all I know, he had accomplished a miracle upon me. The women stood round and sighed their pleasure. "He never treats us to a blessing like that, never !" they murmured with admiring envy.

When he came to rest before me, I perceived that he was a little grey-bearded old gentleman, trim and lean and ruddy. He looked about sixty, but his followers say he is seventy-seven, so that his very activity is miraculous. One side of his forehead bulged with some disease, but from his pale grey eyes looked a healthy spirit. Kindly and innocent, practical, or even housewifely, I should say, rather than intellectual or inspired. There was nothing of the rapt mystic about him, nothing of the divine seer contemplating eternity. Indeed, I was told that he himself makes no claim to prophetic vision, and his gift of foretelling distant events must be unconscious. One of his chief attributes in sanctity appears to be that he lived with the same wife for

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fifty years, I believe all the time at Kronstadt ; and I see no cause to question his miraculous powers, especially as I have known other people similarly endowed, though for qualifications of a different kind.

He stood there, smiling up at me for a moment with innocent good will, and I then perceived that the crimson border of his robe reached halfway down his chest, as well as down his back, and that round his neck, by a heavy silver chain, hung a large silver cross—the Russian Orthodox cross, with a short bar nailed low down upon the shaft for the feet of the Crucified to rest upon, and placed slantingly, so that one end might be higher than the other, because by Eastern tradition Christ was lame on the right foot. I also perceived that the saint's hand, though fine in itself, was worn, as though by the labour of continual benediction. But observing that my eyes rested upon it, he smiled, more benignly than ever, and did what is perfectly natural to any Russian saint or lady—he held it up for me to kiss. It is a peril one is sure to encounter among the priests of the Orthodox Church, and over and over again I have resolved to go through with it manfully. But when the final moment comes, the stubborn British blood begins to jib and swerve, like a horse that cannot be brought up to his fences, and grasping his hand in mine I shook it warmly. I am afraid the women were grieved to think I should remain a heretic, in

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spite of all the advantages they had so eagerly procured me, but there was no help.

The little saint then turned back to the altar and took up the service where he had left off, just as a wood-pigeon takes up his comfortable cadence at the note where last it was broken. The people renewed their interrupted crossings and prostrations, and a young peasant beside me, his dark red hair covering his shoulders, and his single outer garment gathered round his waist with a rope, displayed incredible activity in striking his forehead against the bare boards and springing up again repeatedly almost without pause. I should like to have known for what favour he was so urgent, and willingly would I have granted it if it had been in my power, for no human being could have remained obdurate to such importunity. But the service ended, and with a throng accompanying him the saint, putting his great-coat over his robes and his goloshes over his boots, departed down the street to some other scene of hallowed beneficence.

It was hard to realize that this was Father John of Kronstadt, regarded by revolutionists as among the most dangerous enemies of the Movement. In the political cartoons he almost always figures among the leaders of reaction. One sees pictures of him in his vestments standing beside a cannon trained upon the crowd, or with the other Ministers admiring a huge Christmas tree hung with skulls.

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His saying, at the time of Father Gapon's procession, that "only a sinner could strive against his Tsar," is well known. He is believed, perhaps truly, to possess great influence in the Tsar's family, especially over the women, such as the Dowager Tsarina. According to rumour, his advice is invariably given against every proposal of change or advancement, and the enthusiastic women who procured me his blessing, are identified with the mothers and wives of the most violent and merciless gang of the Black Hundred. That is all very possible, and the recent scandals about a certain Virgin of Kronstadt, who saw her way to making money out of the situation by vicarious sanctitude, are only such as seem to arise inevitably around a fellow mortal of much belauded virtue, whether they are true or not. It is very probable also that the mothers of the Black Hundred secure comparatively honest half-crowns by arranging special interviews and privileges for visitors to the saint. To be sure, I had not to pay a penny for my blessing, but I have known others, less favoured by Heaven, who expended as much as two pound ten for very inferior advantages. When all is said, the detraction of his opponents, and his own abhorrence of progress appear to me the least miraculous things about him. Take a man in youth, train him for years in a seminary where he meets no one but young priests like himself, and hears no one but old priests

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such as he is intended to become ; give him no kind of knowledge but ritual and dogma, which he must accept unquestioned or perish ; let him live many years with one woman in one small place, among people who never contradict him, but either regard his words as divine, or ignore them as parsonic ; add a kindly simplicity to the blank of ignorance ; expose a rather small and finikin personality to feminine adulation ; and if you do not produce the very model of priesthood as exemplified in Father John of Kronstadt, there will be a miracle indeed.

I struggled back again across the frozen sea, where the storm raged with increased violence, and on reaching St. Petersburg, I hastened to a remarkable gathering in the great hall of the Conservatorium. It was a concert given by a body which, with intentional vagueness, called itself the Committee of the Working People, and its purpose was to raise funds for the assistants at the Workmen's Dining Rooms. The performance was announced for eight o'clock, but I need not have hastened ; for, as I have already noticed, there is no pedantic and inconsiderate punctuality in Russian affairs, and when I arrived, some three quarters of an hour late, I found the huge audience still pouring in, and I might have waited another half-hour without missing any of the programme. But at concerts the audience is usually the most interesting part, at all events to a foreigner, and I

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found myself in the midst of the very people who, until quite lately, have been the real revolutionists of Russia. Not very many actual work-people were there, for the prices of seats kept them away ; but the vast concert-hall was soon packed with the educated, the professional men and women, the "proletariat of intellect"—writers, journalists, barristers, doctors, crowds of students, and a good many officers in uniform, though I think that perhaps most of them were army doctors. The scene was a fine example of the frank democracy that distinguishes the Russian people—the enviable disregard of all the weary old distinctions of rank, profession, wealth, or dress. It arises, perhaps, from the ancient village communism, as I have already suggested, and from the common use of Christian names and diminutives, which spreads a brotherly feeling among all classes. Perhaps also from the comparative unimportance of commercial people until lately ; for in most countries it is the commercial classes that maintain inequality. In no society, outside savagedom, have I found such indifference to the nature and distinctions of dress as in Russia. At this concert every class and fashion of costume was to be seen, and no one was regarded as a queer and dubious character if he dressed to please himself. It is quite possible, no doubt, that the brains of many there stood above the freezing point of British social sanity, but in all

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that I have seen of Russian life, I have observed the same democratic ease, the same disregard of the dress that marks a class distinction. It is this sense of the equality of men that brings the Russians and the French together and makes the monstrous alliance of their Governments appear almost natural.

Of course, the whole audience was revolutionary, but in Russia revolution is not thought to imply insanity so much as intelligence, and large numbers had determined there should be no doubt as to their opinions. Many of the students, with long hair all on end, wore the Russian tunic, and no one stared. Some girl-students—those indomitable “Kursistki,” on whom the soldiers have no mercy—were dressed in the loose black blouse, fitting closely to the throat and buttoned along the top of the shoulder instead of down the front or back. A few gentler spirits had yielded to a tiny edge of white collar above the black. But the blouse of the violent shone red, all gules from throat to waist, and the more revolutionary a girl is by nature, the thicker is her hair, and the lower it hangs over her eyes and ears. Her little fur cap also has no brim, as others use, but is plain like a man’s; for a brim is compromise, and at the bottom of the slope of compromise lies ignoble peace.

In course of time the concert began. Perhaps concert is hardly the right word, for I suppose no human soul in all that mass of people had gone to

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hear music or singing, or cared very much what musical sounds were made. Certainly, the musical performers were good, but the interest lay with others—with the well-known young actress who in a voice only slightly more emotional than common speech recited some short poem which all could hear, while the piano played a hardly perceptible accompaniment; or with the famous author who just sat in a chair upon the stage, and read some vivid scene or parable from his own works or another's. As often as not he read it badly, but that made no difference. This was no shrine of art for art's sake. Behind those quiet and halting words burned the whole fire of the revolution, and the applause was not kept for the best performance, but for the most daring passage, or for the hero who had been longest imprisoned for the cause. Such applause as that I have never heard. There was a vital intensity in the enthusiasm that no art could inspire. Time after time the man or woman was recalled. Four times or five times the same piece would be repeated, and still the applause seemed as if it could not end. Eleven times one man was recalled, the whole audience standing up and shouting his name in a tumult of admiration. Not that he recited well, but it was his own work that he recited, and he had only just come out of gaol.

The form of the recitations was almost invariably the parable. Some simple scene or fable was

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narrated, so harmless and childlike on the surface, that the enemy could find no handle for his rage, but inwardly it was charged with a significance like hidden flame. It is a form very natural to Russia, for it has grown out of the peasants' folk-tale and proverb, and the perpetual danger of open expression has kept it alive. So in Gorky's well-known parable, which was one of the many recited, the falcon soars in freedom through the sunlit air, and the snake remains coiled under the dark and chilly stones ; but presently the falcon falls to the ground wounded and dying, while the snake congratulates himself upon the pleasing security of his own habits. Sometimes it was but a common scene of military life that was narrated ; sometimes there came a brief outburst of triumph, "O sleepless nights, your fruits are seen at last !" And in one poem the part of women in Russia's revolution was described almost without subterfuge.

In the souls of the audience only one thought lived. A suppressed excitement breathed throughout the hall. As the words of the speakers or singers rose and fell, the air trembled with the beat of all those minds in unison. There was no sound. Each great word was awaited as one awaits the notes of a solemn music. But it was not the words that were the greatest thing, it was not the performers, not the martyrs, nor even the audience. The greatest thing was the common faith of all. Under that outward

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scene of gleaming lights and varied personality one felt the secret touch of danger, and only in danger is the highest community to be found. One felt the deep and passionate glow of a life brief and insecure. One felt the spirit careless of everything—of joy, of passion, of life itself—of everything, but the one great cause—the only thing that counted, the soul of the crowd, the consciousness that breathed through the air and kept us still. The words ceased. There was a gasp while like one man the great assembly drew in its breath, and then with a rushing wind rose the tempest of applause. And yet it was not the words, nor even the speaker : it was the revolution that was adored.

To have a cause like that, to dwell with danger for the sake of it every day and night, to confront continually an enemy vital, pitiless, almost omnipotent, and execrable beyond words—what other life can compare to that, not only in grandeur, but in the satisfaction of intellect and courage and love and every human faculty ? So tyranny brings its compensations.

At various intervals the audience trooped out from the hall, and walked up and down the great ante-rooms and passages provided in all Russian places of assembly. They greeted each other, they embraced, drank tea, and buzzed with conversation. The intervals lasted about three-quarters of an hour, and were of the highest interest to every one. The

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first ended just before midnight, the second about two. Whether the third ever ended I did not discover, for I was lost in memories of English audiences, upon whose faces a real expression begins to dawn soon after eleven—an expression of impatient anxiety whether they will catch the last 'bus home to bed.

CHAPTER XV

A BLOODY ASSIZE

AT the end of January I left St. Petersburg for Riga and the Baltic Provinces. As in other parts of Russia, the hopes of change had faded there, and the whole land lay prostrate under a bloodthirsty suppression, the more savage because it was encouraged by a double race hatred—the ancient feud of German, Russian, and Lett. As I came at sunrise through the fir forests and frozen heaths of Livonia, twenty-five men were being shot in cold blood among the sandhills beside the railway. They were tied together in a row by their feet and arms, and they fell together ; but the firing was so bad that many were hardly hit at all, and had to be finished off at close quarters before they were heaped together into a trench already prepared for them. When I reached the town, the first thing I met was a party of twenty soldiers with fixed bayonets driving along four boys of eighteen or nineteen, who marched with their hands in the pockets of their long coats and their caps drawn low down over their pale and weary faces. They were being taken to the castle, where,

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I was told, a hundred more lay ready for killing, and would probably be slaughtered on the sandhills next morning. It was a fitting entrance for me into these once peaceful and civilized provinces, where now the bloody assize was raging.

The daily papers in Riga are, for the most part, German, but, for once, they were on the side of the Government and the Russian troops, because the leaders of the attempted revolution and the victims in its suppression were Letts. So they would not be likely to exaggerate the injustice and brutality of the assize. Yet each of them, above its tender German love-story or bit of art criticism, displayed columns of tabulated slaughter, and the whole local news of the three Baltic Provinces consisted of shootings, hangings, and floggings. The accounts were generally arranged by villages. For instance, from one number of the leading Riga paper I take the following reports, almost at random, out of the columns that appeared above an excellent appreciation of Ruskin's "*Præterita*"—

"Tarvast.—The whole population of the village over the age of fifteen was brought before the court-martial to-day. Six were shot on the spot, including one woman; nine were flogged with strokes varying from twenty-five to two hundred."

I need not say that two hundred strokes of a wooden rod delivered by soldiers on the naked

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body of either a woman or a man would mean almost certain death in its most terrible form.

"Semzel.—Yesterday six revolutionaries were shot, and four the day before. In the neighbouring parish of Lemberg twenty-four were flogged.

"Kokenhusen.—Nine people were hanged here to-day.

"Dahlen.—A squadron of dragoons, half a troop of Cossacks, a company of infantry, two cannon, and two machine-guns arrived here to-day. Dahlen had elected a revolutionary parish council; so a court-martial was held, and four men shot on the spot. Several farms were destroyed by shells.

"Neuenmühle.—The schoolmaster was hanged on a telephone post here to-day, for having allowed public meetings in his school. Two young girls were flogged with rods for having stitched a red flag.

"Wolmar.—This morning early, two boys, one only fifteen, evidently much excited, ran up to a patrol of soldiers and tried to catch hold of a rifle, saying they would show them how to shoot. They were captured, and General Orloff, being consulted by telephone, ordered their immediate execution. They received the Sacrament, and were shot in the presence of a large number of spectators. The execution appears to have exercised a salutary impression upon the whole population of Wolmar."

Village after village had that salutary impression exercised upon it, and one week after another the papers told the same monotonous story of cold-hearted bloodshed.

The German landowners, some of whom had suffered considerable losses during the peasants'

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rising, hounded on the military to vengeance. No measures were harsh enough for them, no executions too bloody. They taunted the Governor-General Sollogub with half-hearted mildness, and clamoured for the appointment of the drunken butcher, General Orloff, in his place. They appeared to long for the extermination of the race which for centuries had been their servants. A daughter of a great landowner, whom I met, said to me, "One of the peasants themselves told me to-day that at least a third of them deserve to be shot, and he hopes they will be. I was so glad to hear him say so."

Certainly, for those who had run for refuge into the town, as most of the German landowners had, life was unavoidably dull. Beyond the restaurants, two music-halls, and a number of brothels, there was nothing to distract a gentleman's mind. The landowner pined for the country life and healthy sport to which he was accustomed. His imagination was haunted by the smoking ruin to which his ancestral home had been reduced. When he had once enjoyed the newspaper columns of executions and floggings which were served with his breakfast, new every morning like the love of God, there was really nothing left to beguile the tedium of existence till evening came. Even then the entertainment was rather dreary—a German *café chantant*, with sweet champagne and half a dozen girls whom the proprietor paid to be pleasant. "I suppose I shall have

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to go and see that dancer again," said one of the nobility to me, as he yawned and stretched himself. "It will be something to do. Her legs aren't really good, I know, but in these times we must all take what pleasure we can."

On going out, we met a strong body of soldiers driving three prisoners rapidly along the street. Flanking files had been thrown out upon the pavements, and a large rearguard followed. One of the prisoners was a ragged man without a hat, and his arms were pinioned to his sides. The other two were women, with white handkerchiefs over their heads, showing they were Letts. They passed very quickly, the soldiers, with fixed bayonets, urging them continually onward from behind. A feeling of intense excitement prevailed. The soldiers were terrified of a rescue. An eager though cautious crowd followed at some distance, like the children who follow bullocks to the slaughter-houses in Aldgate. So they hastened along the road out of the town towards the sandhills, and in half an hour the man and two women were dead and left warm in their graves.

The Letts boast themselves to be the Irish of Russia. They are the ancient peasant race, whose land has fallen into the hands of alien conquerors, now supported by a foreign military power. For eight centuries the country of the Letts and the smaller tribes of Lithuanians and Esthonians has been the prey of Germans, Swedes, and Russians in

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turn. But the Germans, the descendants of the Sword-Brothers and the Teutonic Order, who first introduced the laws of conquest and Christianity among them,* have remained the chief owners of the great estates, and the culture of the towns is mainly German also. All three tribes come of an imaginative and artistic stock. Many of the leading writers and artists of Russia are Letts, and in their own strange language—probably the most ancient in Europe, and most nearly akin to old Sanskrit—they possess an immense collection of primitive folk-songs and legends. They are not so advanced—not so artistic in form and feeling as the Lithuanian songs, which are familiar in German translations, such as the beautiful and characteristic song set to music by Chopin. But the Lettish songs follow the ancient Asiatic form, seldom more than four or six lines long—simple outbursts of joy and sorrow over the great events of all human life, birth and spring and love and harvest and winter and death. They are full of prehistoric myth and lore. Herder translated a few when he was a parson in Riga about a hundred and forty years ago, but I cannot find that even the Germans have taken the trouble to translate them with any completeness. For the tongue has been despised and neglected, just as Irish was in former years.

The race is like the language. Ages have passed

* See Carlyle's "Frederick the Great," Book II. ch. vi.

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over the people since first they settled down among the sandy heaths and quiet watercourses of the Baltic shore. Their hair and eyes have changed from dark to fair. Their religion has changed from primitive nature-worship to Catholicism, and then to Lutheranism. Evangelical they still remain, though Russia has tried hard for twenty-five years to make them Orthodox. But at heart they continue as they originally were, speaking the same tongue, doing the same work, and building the same houses. On almost any farm you may see the conical outdoor kitchens, modelled on the very huts that they built as they walked from Asia before man learnt his letters. Even their modern farmhouses are constructed on a very ancient type. They are made entirely of wood without any iron, even without nails, the corner joints being dovetailed together with perfect skill. The roofs too, though sometimes thatched with reeds, are nearly always formed of wooden slabs like slates. Round the central house of two large rooms, with high lofts for winter storage, several wings or extra chambers are thrown out, for the labourers (Knechte), or for poorer people who cannot afford a house of their own, but pay a rent in money or work. In this way I have seen five other families gathered round one peasant court or farm (Gesinde, as it is called, the old German word, like the use of Knechte, marking the date of the Prussian occupation).

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This peculiarity probably springs from the ancient Lettish habit of living in isolation, like the Boers, and not huddled together in villages, like the Germans or Russians. The peasants' homes are generally at least a mile or two apart. The country is divided into large parishes, but a village can hardly be said to exist, and probably this isolation has made the people an easier prey to their successive conquerors. There are no Lettish towns at all, for such places as Riga and Dorpat and Mitau were entirely German, but for some hardly perceptible traces of the Swede, till the curse of Russia fell upon them, little over a century ago. Indeed, to enter one of these old towns even now, and to live among the spires and tiled roofs after the bulbous domes and green iron of Russia, is like going back from Gorky's sombre desperation to the smile and sunlight of "Meister's Apprenticeship."

Scattered through the three Provinces there are about a million and a half of Letts living in this way. Most of them now own their patches of land, or are buying slowly, by annual payments. They till the ground in summer, and in winter they weave with their own looms, spin with their own spinning wheels, feed the cattle in the barns, and slide the wood over the snow from the forests. It is not a bad kind of life. Compared to ordinary Russian peasants, the people are rich beyond dreams, and things went pleasantly in the Provinces till the hideous system

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called Russification began just a quarter of a century ago, upon the accession of Alexander III.—“The Camel,” as they still call him. It was completed, as far as laws can go, in 1889, by the introduction of Russian jurisdiction and language. Since then, the object of the Russian Government has been to thwart German industry, to stifle German culture, and to inflame the Letts against the Germans in hopes that the two races may exterminate each other. So far the design appears likely to succeed. Corrupt Russian officials govern, ignorant Russian professors have taken the place of men like Harnack at the Dorport University, untrained Russian teachers pretend to educate children by means of a language that no child understands, the ancient rights of the provinces have been taken away one by one, and by continual incitement the Letts were at last goaded into burning the country houses of the German landowners.

There are about seven hundred estates in Livonia alone, including the various Crown lands, and in the three Provinces taken together it was estimated that two hundred and fifty country houses had been burnt. This was said to represent about fifteen per cent. of the total of existing estates. In many cases, no doubt, the landowners were leading a monotonous and stupid kind of life, and the loss of their possessions will open to them a wider horizon, with new chances of happiness. But as a rule they

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are a pleasant, healthy kind of people, like the country gentlemen who used to exist in England, and the Lettish peasants felt no violent personal animosity towards the man whom they were accustomed to call Master. One of the largest landowners, for instance, the proprietor of four separate estates, thus described to me how the trouble began in his favourite country house :—

“It was last December. Owing to the disturbances throughout the country, I had sent my wife and children into Riga. One day a deputation of peasants came and rang at the front door. I received them in the hall.

“‘Master (Herr),’ they said ; ‘we are heartily sorry, but we have condemned you to death.’

“‘Oh, you have condemned me to death, have you ?’ I answered.

“‘Yes, master,’ they said. ‘We are heartily sorry. You are a good master, and we have nothing against you, but we have condemned you to death.’

“‘All right,’ I answered ; ‘what’s your reason ?’

“‘You see, you have more land than we have,’ they said.

“‘Certainly,’ I answered ; ‘but many of you have more land than others.’

“‘Yes, that is true,’ they said ; ‘but all the land is ours by right. Your fathers took it away from us

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seven hundred years ago, and now we are going to nationalize it all.'

"'Well,' I answered ; 'I suppose you must do what you like. When are you going to begin?'

"'Oh, master,' they said, 'we are heartily sorry. You are a good master, but we have just condemned you to death, and now we have come to warn you first. Master, we strongly advise you to escape.'

"So the conversation went on. A few days later, they made an attack upon the house in the evening. But I had armed two of my own servants ; we fired a gun from a window, and they all went away again. But after that my wife was so frightened that I came into Riga, and now the peasants are sending us firewood and vegetables twice a week by sledge, because they have heard such things are dear in town."

It is easy to imagine the peculiar confusion that would arise in such kindly and childlike minds when young students and orators, like the almost mythical leader "Maxim," come out to their isolated farms and preached Karl Marx to them, and the socialisation of wealth, or the glories of a Lettish republic. Social change and the sense of nationality were equal motives in the rising. Excited by wild hopes, inspired by man's natural longing for equality, by race hatred, and by the oppressions of a stupid

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and savage Government from abroad, they turned upon the country houses, the church records, the Government offices, and the portraits of the Tsar as the symbols of all that stood between them and happiness.

Certainly the German landowners suffered, and a few were assassinated. It was part of the Russian Government's scheme that they should suffer, and one of the strangest things in the whole situation of these Baltic Provinces was the unanimity with which, not only every Lett, but every German whether in town or country, rejected the idea of appealing to the German Empire for protection. The suggestion of such a thing made the mildest German mad. It united German and Lett like comrades in arms against a common enemy. The Germans cling to their German language and culture ; they will go to any trouble and expense to avoid Russian education ; they have the utmost contempt for Russian law and justice ; by union with Germany they would gain immensely in government and probably in trade. Yet from Russia they will endure any hardship rather than look to Berlin for help. It is a remarkable instance of the truth that man is governed, not by his interests, but by his tastes. Hearing the protest repeated with vehemence by a beautiful German lady whose home had been burnt down, I asked her the reason, and she said : " We could not endure to be told at

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every corner not to spit and not to lean out of the window."

So the landowners suffer, and bear those ills they have. But the man whose suffering to me seemed least deserved was not a landowner, but a country parson. He was so old that I may mention his name without harm, and it is known to the scholars of Europe; for he was Pastor Bielenstein, the greatest authority upon the Lettish language and literature, and authorities are very few. I found him in Mitau, the Courland capital, a quiet German town not far from Riga. There he had taken refuge in a few small rooms, when the peasants chased him from the parsonage, which had been his for sixty years and his father's before him. In mind and appearance he belonged to an age that Germany has long left behind—the simple age of the Humboldts and the Grimms. He must be one of the very few Germans left who remember the death of Goethe, and to listen to him was like conversing with those gentle followers of learning a century ago, who combined a zeal for knowledge with a childlike trust in "the dear God." All the sixty years in his parish had been devoted to the cure of souls and the collection of every fragment of Lettish literature—folk-songs, riddles, proverbs, and legends. Volume after volume appeared, and there they all stand as a monument of German industry, though, unhappily, intelligible only to Lettish speakers.

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Having lost his sight over his work, and growing very old, with his aged wife and grandchildren around him, he determined to write one more book and then depart in peace. The title of the book was "The Happy Life," and hardly had he published it when the peasants came to his church, ordered him to leave out the Tsar from his prayers, attacked his house, shot his sexton, held eight rifles at his daughter's heart, burnt his library, smashed his china, trampled on his harpsichord, and made a bonfire of his furniture in the garden, kindling it with his manuscripts. Thus he was driven out, blind, aged, and poor, to begin a new volume of a life which he thought was ending happily.

"But we do not regret the title of my book, do we, dear wife? We have not lost our trust in the dear God," he said, bending his tall, slim figure to kiss the old lady's hand.

"No," she answered. "We have lost our best china, but our guest will kindly excuse it."

While we were thus conversing, the pastor of a neighbouring parish entered, a little excited over a scene in which he had just taken part. There had been an execution in his village that morning, and it was his duty to conduct the funeral of the young revolutionist who was shot. For some reason the officer in command had ordered a party of horse and foot with two guns to attend the ceremony and prevent any disturbance. "The coffin and I were

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surrounded by soldiers along the whole route," said the pastor ; "and when we came to the grave, the people were kept three hundred yards away. The result was that they could not hear a word of the sermon which I had prepared with special care for the occasion. As it was in Lettish, the soldiers did not understand it, and all my pains were entirely thrown away."

So each suffered in his fashion.

All through the open country parties of cavalry went trotting from farm to farm. Infantry drove in sledges, holding their rifles ready. General Orloff had then made his headquarters at Segewold, some forty miles north of Riga, and obtaining a sledge there with a Lett driver who spoke German, I was able to travel far through the low hills and wooded valleys where the troops were at their work. The ruins of ancient castles built by the Prussian Orders are rather frequent in that neighbourhood, and the modern country houses which have taken their place are especially fine—great mansions like our own "outposts of barbarism," some with gables and mullions, some with classic pediments and columns in the "Georgian style." But all were empty now, and not a sound arose even from the stables and barns. One great house, as famous as any monastery for its liqueurs, had been burnt to a cinder of ruin, and there was hardly a farm around which had not lost a father or son, hanged for burning it. The

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farms we passed appeared to be equally empty ; but when the driver gradually discovered that I had no direct concern for Russian Government or German landowners, he began to spread communications along the road by a system of signals and cries. Faces would then peer out from the entrances of fowl houses, or sudden questions would come from the depths of a holly bush. In the quick conversations that followed I heard the word "Cossacks" constantly repeated, for every mounted soldier is to them a Cossack, and the question they always asked was whether the soldiers were coming. Too often they were coming. We had seen them behind us, or had watched a party moving down a hill, or cautiously making their way through woods. The infantry in sledges were harder to distinguish ; but they were less numerous, and they went in obvious terror. Under their houses some of the peasants had dug deep holes to hide in, and some had taken to caverns in the sandstone hillsides, covered among the woods. But it was chilly weather for that kind of life. The soldiers were everywhere. In every parish a certain number of victims had to be offered up to create a salutary impression, and all I can hope is that our lonely little sledge, passing almost unobserved along the lanes, may perhaps have saved one or two by its warnings. That it was allowed to pass unobserved must be put down to kindly fortune, for I had applied for the necessary permission to

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visit the country districts, but had applied utterly in vain. I have often noticed that the agents of justice display a peculiar shyness about the presence of spectators when they are killing men and women as the law directs.

On the other hand, there was, perhaps, too little reserve about another habit practised by the officers in command—the habit of ordering executions by telephone in the presence of the condemned. In Riga I had heard of instances, and they appeared to me to show a peculiarly cold-hearted brutality, though I do not quite understand why. The driver told me of a similar case which had happened in Segewold. After the rapid court-martial and sentence, the officer rang up on the telephone : “Hullo ! Is that the sergeant ? All right. Have a firing party here six o’clock to-morrow morning. Three prisoners to be shot. Six men will be enough. No, better bring ten perhaps. Mind they’re not late. Six o’clock to-morrow morning. Three prisoners. All right.” Then he rang off, and the prisoners were led away. It was like ordering the funeral lunch in the hearing of the sick.

As a contrast to these things I may mention an occurrence that was thought humorous, and was known to every one in Riga at the time. It concerned a young Lettish schoolmistress who was sentenced to be flogged. Not understanding either the sentence or the brutal orders and gestures of

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the soldiers, whose duty it was to carry it out, she thought she was to be violated, and that story was an inexhaustible subject of mirth among the commercial and landowning classes in the Riga restaurants. I have heard it translated into four languages so that no one present might miss the full humour of the situation.

So it went on. In the country the people died by hundreds. They were flogged, they were hanged, they were shot. Their wooden farmhouses were burnt to the ground. Their children were turned out in the winter to starve. Men and women alike were slaughtered by hundreds, and no one had pity on them. I heard no single word of pity or of understanding spoken in any language, and week after week the bloody assize went on.

Thank God, there were reprisals, however few. Soldiers on the march through the town moved in single file for fear of bombs, and even that did not always save them. The assassinations of policemen upon the streets averaged one or perhaps two a day. The police lived in terror, and as they went their rounds in groups of two or three, they were escorted by an equal number of soldiers with fixed bayonets. Continual alarms arose from every quarter of Riga; the reports of revolvers or rifles would suddenly be heard, and this way and that the people ran. Two or three days after I arrived there was a gallant rescue from the very police-station itself.

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At eight o'clock in the morning two women came to the door with food for five prisoners who were lying under sentence of death for the assassination of a police officer named Porschetsky. As they were going away, eight or ten men entered. Some seized the police on duty, killing one and wounding two others who resisted, and four went to the cells and released all five prisoners, who walked quietly in different directions down the streets and escaped, though without their hats. One of them was recaptured two days later while foolishly tying on a false beard in a barber's shop. His sister who was with him, fell on the floor, and clinging to the knees of the police implored for mercy. The barber fainted with excitement, and the man was dragged away and shot.

The same afternoon a young boy passing my hotel was bayoneted to death by a soldier for refusing to halt at command. Whether he was another of the five or simply did not hear the order, I did not discover. He was under twenty, dark haired, with the clear and intellectual face that characterises the Lettish students, artists, and other revolutionaries of the towns.

Of the same type was another boy who was shot the following Sunday morning at nine o'clock just outside the castle wall. There were eight in the firing party. "One, two, three—fire!" said the sergeant, and the boy fell like a dummy on the

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stage, to the edification of the early churchgoers who crowded round to examine the body. And with that typical scene in my mind I was obliged to take leave of the Baltic Provinces, marked in every economic map as one of the few fairly prosperous regions of the Russian Empire.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PARTIES OF POLAND

OUTSIDE the discussion of an English Education Bill, I suppose that upon the world's surface you would not find such an atmosphere of energetic pettiness and trivial virulence as in Warsaw. Not that the ultimate aims of the chief combatants are petty, but that many natures take so much more delight in clawing their friends over trifles than in uniting against the common enemy.

In speaking of the Poles in St. Petersburg, I have already described a Polish restaurant there which was sharply divided by an invisible but impassable line into two camps, both violently Polish, and both so hostile to each other that the girls of one would not speak or eat with the girls of the other, nor even with the men. Warsaw displayed a similar division in almost every street. Very likely it is the price that Poles pay for the strong individuality which has given them so many poets, artists, and musicians. The consequence is that in Warsaw, the parties are continually shifting, and grow like polyps by splitting themselves into

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fractions, so that the political student, after weeks of labour, goes to bed one night happily conscious of having mastered the situation at last, and wakes up in the morning to find the whole thing changed.

But before describing what I believe to have been the condition of Polish parties one post time on a February morning, it may be well to estimate the strength of the common enemy's position, as one of the enemy's leaders himself defined it. Of the three highest officials in Poland he was the most experienced in the country and spoke with the greatest authority. Even the extra number of footmen who took my coat symbolized a power of life and death.

"Martial law," he began at once, "will be unflinchingly maintained, at all events till the Duma meets. These Poles are an unreasonable, unpractical people, full of crazy notions. They need a strong hand. They mistake kindness for fear. They must be firmly dealt with. They like it really—in his heart every Pole likes it. Since we proclaimed martial law last November there has been no disturbance. And for forty years before that—ever since we crushed the Polish revolution in 1864—order had reigned."

I smiled inwardly, remembering that well-worn quotation about the order that reigned in Warsaw, and I looked at the speaker with fresh interest. I had often heard of him as the perfect type of the

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thorough-going reactionaries, the real old Russian bureaucrats, who were fighting the revolution at the last ditch for their ideal of empire, their privileges, and their pay. A tall and shapely man of about fifty, diplomatically courteous and grave, he became the furniture of the official palace very well, but in his round, bright eyes I sometimes detected the alert and watchful look of a racoon when he confronts you suddenly in the forest. He afterwards described me to a friend as a terrible revolutionist, and as I remained almost silent during the conversation, being overcome by the superiority of his French, that showed a penetration which gave greater value to his judgments.

“Yes,” he repeated, “these Poles have always been an unreasonable and unpractical people, full of flighty notions. You may now divide them into Nationalists and Socialists — both about equally absurd. I need not speak of the Socialists and the nonsense they talk of equality and nationalization. They are the same everywhere. In Poland we found them doing a certain amount of harm among the peasants ; so we quartered troops in the villages, and now the peasants have turned against the Socialists like other right-minded men. Indeed, the Jewish Bund is the only troublesome Socialist body now left, and we are dealing with them. They will tend to disappear.

“The Nationalists are equally helpless. They

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make a mighty fuss about the suppression of their language, but in our Empire we must have one common language, and it must be Russian. Then as to their Catholic religion: the Poles are a singularly fanatical people. Their attachment to their superstitious rites is most extraordinary. Even the educated classes are little better than fanatics in their religious beliefs. They are incapable of any breadth of view, and if we gave the people the chance, they would show themselves utterly intolerant of the Orthodox Church. They would insult and persecute our fellow-believers. Such things we cannot allow, and we will not.

“Nor can we yield to their talk about autonomy and separation. It is all very well for England to grant autonomy to her Colonies over the sea. She has not granted it to Ireland, and she does not grant it to India. We have not the least desire to become a powerless confederation like Austria, in perpetual danger of disruption. That would be even worse than to become like Germany, continually hampered by her Socialists. Any kind of separation would mean immediate ruin to Poland and her industries. Russia, Siberia, and the Far East are her only markets. If she were separated from us, first she would starve, next she would be swallowed up by Germany, and foolish as the Poles are, they still have sense enough to hate the Germans more than they hate us.

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“It is true that in a weak moment our Government made concessions to Finland, and that has encouraged the Poles to hope for the same. But we shall not be able to allow Finland to remain on a different footing from the rest of the Empire. Those concessions must rapidly be withdrawn. We shall very likely have to conquer Finland over again. That would be an easy task, and need cause us no apprehension. All special rights in any part of the Empire must vanish, and the whole Empire must be bound together into one. If we yield at any point, we must yield in all, and that is impossible.

“It is impossible for our own safety. Here in Poland, for instance, we have to defend a frontier where there is no natural barrier to ward off an attack by Germany. Even if we gave up Poland as far as the Vistula, it would not help us. In these days a river is no real protection in war; if the Vistula were a mountain chain, that would be a different question. As it is, we must maintain our two parallel lines of fortresses in Poland, and especially the triangle of the three main strongholds, of which Warsaw is one. The triangle is too large to be surrounded, and it would secure us the time for mobilization. For certainly we could not mobilize nearly so fast as Germany.

“That is the plain truth of the situation. People talk about Russia's internal troubles, but they are not of any importance. It is mainly an

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agrarian question. The peasants think their land insufficient, because they are too ignorant to cultivate it properly, and the redistribution of the land by the communes every twelve years—it used to be every year—deprives them of the valuable sense of ownership. We must abolish the communal system, institute private ownership in land, and plant several new colonies—in Siberia, for example. Then you will see that Russia will easily regain her former condition of quietude and prosperity.

“And, as to Poland again, you will find that if the Duma meets, it will be compelled to govern Poland exactly as the Autocracy has governed it in the past, and is governing it now.”

It was a frank and reasonable statement of the reactionary position, and, if once the bureaucrat's estimate of government and of human nature be accepted, the position is easy to defend. Like most Conservatives, the bureaucrats and reactionaries know pretty definitely what they mean, and what they do not want ; for even a prophet may perhaps find it easier to see the past clearly than the future. To know the object clearly is a great advantage in controversy, and in action it means victory, unless the enemy knows still more definitely what he intends to have. But in Poland there are so many intentions that the battle for nationality and freedom is more than usually difficult.

At the back of all modern politics stands the

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workman, tending with every decade to become the only kind of citizen that need be considered. We must suppose therefore that the various Polish parties who are battling for nationality and freedom have the advancement of the workman ultimately in view, and certainly there are few European countries where his advancement is more obviously desirable. In commerce, Poland has suffered more than any other part of Russia from the disasters of the last few years. About five years ago, the time of ruin set in with a commercial depression, vaguely attributed to over-production. Hardly was trade recovering when the outbreak of the Japanese war checked every hope. Siberia and the Far East had become, as my official rightly said, the chief markets for such great industrial centres as Warsaw and Lodz. Then suddenly all orders ceased, the goods already despatched could neither be recovered nor paid for, and the railways were taken up by the army. Ordinary trade dropped, and only those firms could look for any profit which received Government orders for barbed-wire entanglements, empty shrapnel cases, and metals for field railways—"goods" which must be paid for by the starving peasants, and might just as well have been sunk in the sea at once. Out of thirty-one ironworks, ten closed their gates, and the rest blew out half their furnaces. It is true, the iron industry is rather an artificial thing, which even in peaceful times lives

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chiefly on Government patronage. For it has to import coke from Siberia, and ore from Krivoy Rog in South Russia. But the losses in the iron trade were equalled by disasters in other industries, and the only instance of success I heard of during the war was that the big chocolate works received large orders to supply officers at the front. It is not the first time we have heard of "chocolate-cream soldiers." Indeed, chocolate is taking the place of the Homeric onions as the food of heroes.

The war also ruined credit, and Polish trade lives on credit. Warsaw depends entirely upon Berlin for money, and Berlin refused to lend. On the top of the war came the strikes—political strikes, economic strikes, general strikes, postal strikes. All through last year they went on, and there was hardly a firm that did not lose from a third to a half of its work. The severity with which the strikes were put down only increased the resentment of the working-classes, and the people deliberately preferred general ruin to the continuance of former conditions, whether of government or industry.

Such was the outlook of workmen in the towns. But about eighty per cent. (something over 8,000,000) of the Poles are agriculturists, and nearly half of these have no land of their own, but are forced to wander round as labourers, some 200,000 of them going into East Prussia yearly

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for the harvest, and most of them working in towns from time to time. It is true that the peasants are slowly buying more and more land from the bankrupt old nobility, who used to own Poland, and were the chief cause of her ruin as a nation. The average price they pay for the land is from £5 to £6 an acre, and the average peasant holding is seventeen acres. But this division into plots is at present lowering the standard of agriculture, and so things will go from bad to worse till the peasant gains a little learning, and puts science into his primitive methods. At present more than half of the populations cannot write or read, and the proportion of schools to the number of children is actually decreasing. In Warsaw alone there are 60,000 children for whom there is no place in school, and the amount spent on education per head of the population is 6*d.*, as compared with 9*s.* 7*d.* in Berlin. Yet the Poles justly boast themselves better educated and more intelligent than average Russians. In brains and Western knowledge they are immensely in advance.

The population, which is thicker on the ground than in France, increases very rapidly, and that is one of the reasons why wages in the last ten years have remained stationary in Warsaw, though the cost of living has doubled. In the country a farm labourer's wage is 9*d.* a day. In the towns the unskilled workman gets about 14*s.* a week, and the

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unskilled woman from 6s. to. 12s. But a skilled workman, such as a weaver, will make £2 10s. or even £3 a week for nine hours' work a day. The rent of two fairly good rooms with kitchen, on the fourth floor, is from 4s. to 5s. a week. But owing to the large numbers of the unskilled, it is very common to find four families living in one room, and the standard of life, especially among the Polish Jews, who number 1,500,000 of the population, is very low, as any Londoner may see by walking down Whitechapel. As usual, the Jews are regarded as the worst of all work-people, though they make most money in dealing. On the other hand, the overseers in mills, whether German or English, spoke very highly to me of the Poles as mechanics, especially of the girls. "When they will work, these Poles are first-rate," said an English manager in a lace works. "But they are butterflies, all butterflies," he added with a sigh. "I sent my little boy to school here, and they taught him languages well, but unverity better. So now I've sent him to England, where at least he'll learn nothing."

In the accounts I heard or read of Polish trade, two other points appeared to me unhappily characteristic. One was that Polish hides have to be sold at a cheaper rate than their apparent value, because they are scarred and spoilt by the cruelty with which the Polish peasants use their heavy whips. The

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same is true even of the pigs, in which Poland does an immense trade ; both the skins and the bacon are deteriorated by the cruelty of the swineherds. The other point I discovered in a Consular Report, which noticed that in Poland there is a very large demand for antiquities—"family portraits, signet rings, blood-stained weapons, and so on"—and suggested that, though Germany has almost entirely ousted English trade from the country, an opening for romantic Birmingham goods might here be found. It certainly seems a needless sorrow that any one who desires a family portrait or blood-stained weapon should be without it.

From all this it appears that the Polish parties have enough scope for their labours on behalf of the workmen and labourers, even without the internecine intrigues and animosities with which they enliven their task, like British sects battling for the Kingdom of Heaven. Among the leading parties on the extreme right stands the solid phalanx of officials and reactionaries ; but it is not to be called Polish. It is manned from the 300,000 Russians who are distributed among the 10,000,000 Poles. It is the party of "the Garrison." For no Pole can become an official—not even a policeman—unless he is first thoroughly Russianised and joins the Orthodox Church, and even in Russia it is only the officials and priests who are genuinely reactionary on principle, because it is they who

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are fighting for their existence in their last dirty ditch.

But next to the reactionaries, though far removed, came a genuine Polish party, who called themselves sometimes Realists, sometimes Conciliators, because they represented their aims as real or tangible things, and they were willing to act as peacemakers between Government and people. They were the moderate Opportunists, the cautious bourgeoisie (if any Pole is cautious), and they looked to the Duma for salvation by gradual reforms. Still, they would struggle, however gently, for autonomy, and, conscious of their own weakness in numbers, they were willing to lend the weight of their intellectual powers (which they believed to be considerable) to any union of moderate Nationalist parties.

In practical politics (if Polish politics ever became practical) the Realists, who were called a staff without an army, were expected to unite with the National Democrats, who were an army without a staff. Certainly the National Democrats were numerous and confident. They alone of all the Polish parties were doing what we should call election work for the Duma; for though their meetings were forbidden by the Government, those who attended them were not necessarily shot. I was myself present at one of those meetings, held in an upper room decorated with pictures of dead animals, and some seventy or eighty gentlemen were there, for

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the most part substantial and elderly. There was something a little pathetic about the performance, for they had met to practise how to do it, and they reminded me of a class of dockers I once tried to teach writing in Poplar, because they had escaped the School Board. It is now eighty years since there was anything in the least like an election in Poland, and that was for the Polish Parliament which preceded the revolution of 1831. The tradition of how to vote had died since then, and those few comfortable gentlemen in the upper chamber were trying to recover it. Each received a pencil and a little square of blank paper, and after they had followed their instructions to the best of their ability, the papers were collected and mistakes pointed out. As a first lesson in the nomination of candidates, the result showed considerable promise, and the teacher, who had studied in England, expressed much satisfaction at the progress made.

The twelve wards into which Warsaw was divided had to choose eighty electors between them, and upon these eighty fell the choice of the two members who were to represent Warsaw in the Duma. These two were counted among the thirty-six who would stand for Poland as a whole. The Jews, who make up a third part of Warsaw's population, were the only formidable opponents to the National Democrats. But the Jews are nearly all Socialists, and as the Socialists had up to that time

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refused to recognize the Duma or take any part in the elections, the National Democrats expected to secure all the "college" of electors.

Their programme was more advanced than I should have supposed from the rather venerable appearance of their meeting. They aimed at complete Polish autonomy in a Russian Federation. They demanded the use of Polish in schools and law-courts; the appointment of Poles to all offices of local administration; complete local self-government for towns and country districts; and some included the restoration of the Polish Parliament as it existed from 1813 to 1831. This programme was obviously very much more Nationalist than Democratic, but, in spite of the demand for Home Rule, there was no intention whatever of breaking away from Russia. My reactionary official was again right in saying that the Poles, like the Baltic Provinces, would rather suffer under Russia than under Germany. The one thing that ended the great general strike was the cry purposely, though falsely, raised by the masters, "The Prussians are coming!" Germans may think it difficult to understand, but, outside Germany, a certain pleasantness of manner counts for something in the affairs of life, and very few people really enjoy being goaded along the regulation road to official perfection.

Next to the National Democrats came the

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Progressive Democrats, who bridged the gulf from respectability to Socialism, like Mr. John Burns, let us say, or practical leaders of his type. They were what we should call extreme Radicals, but they liked to borrow the word "Fabians," not having yet discovered that the Fabian Society ceased to count in the advance of thought or politics after the support its majority gave to the South African War. Like academic people among ourselves, they are fond of repeating that they demand evolution, not revolution, but their opposition to the Government is nevertheless sincere, and many of them were in prison. The gradual nationalization of the land, with compensation but compulsory sale where an owner possesses over a certain maximum, is a great point in their programme, and their aims in general are rather social than political, though they, too, demand a Polish Parliament and a military system under which Polish recruits shall remain in Poland. Like the Socialists, they refused to take any part in the elections, because under martial law there could be no freedom of choice. Otherwise, they would have formed the natural allies of the Constitutional Democrats elsewhere.

The powerful party known as National or Polish Socialists came very near to these. In fact, no one but a Pole could have discovered in their programmes any distinction calling for passionate antipathy. They followed the usual Socialistic lines, with Polish

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autonomy thrown in, and they also prided themselves on their practical or "real" policy.

Next to them, but separated by the impassable abyss of family animosity, came their bitterest enemies, the Social Democrats, with their usual maximum and minimum programmes, that require no further definition. For the Gospel of St. Marx upholds the doctrine of faith all the world over, and its canon allows no variation of circumstance or nationality. In Poland, perhaps, its followers show themselves a little more pedantic and superior than elsewhere, and it is their intolerance of every other form of progress which has done most to keep the parties divided, and maintain the enemy in power. Possibly for this reason, combined with the imprisonment of all their leaders, they appeared, whilst I was in Warsaw, to have lost ground, in spite of their careful organization and superhuman rectitude.

Below them—far below them, they would say—came the Proletariat Socialists, the workman's party, who refused all "truck" with students or lawyers, or any other members of the "Intelligenza" and bourgeoisie. They were the extremists; thirty years ago they would have been called Nihilists, though unruly. They preached revolutionary violence of any kind, and took the immediate happiness of the working man as their motive and rule in all conduct. Beyond that, they possessed the immense advantage of being entirely free from all doctrines,

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theories, and abstractions. For they held by the simple and obvious fact, that a certain amount of pleasure may be obtained from life, and the working man does not get it.

There remains but one party of importance, but it is a little difficult to place it in rank with the rest. For the Bund is not specially a Polish party. As I have shown, it spreads through Kieff, Odessa, and all Southern Russia. But in Warsaw it is particularly strong, because, beyond all others, it is the Jewish party. In social aims it agrees with the Social Democrats, but its methods are more definite and more violent. In Warsaw, its members were at that time collecting arms, organizing bands, and conducting propaganda in meetings that were protected by armed groups. Their programme was to carry on the revolution by a series of general strikes, combined with armed demonstrations and attacks upon Government buildings or officials, and they looked forward to a general and violent insurrection of all Socialists in Russia. Obviously, the first care of such a party should be to win over the enemy's armed forces, for as long as the Russian Government could trust the army to do the slaughtering for them, a violent insurrection was outside serious consideration. Accordingly, the Bund was continually sending out agents to work among the soldiers. These agents endeavoured to establish in the army a large society of men, who should take an oath never

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to fire upon their fellow-citizens. There were minor points—a demand for better treatment, a refusal to act as officers' servants, or to serve outside their home district. But not to fire on citizens was the main thing, and if once that pledge could be imposed upon the Russian army as a whole, the Government, with all its frippery and all its brutality, would vanish in a week.

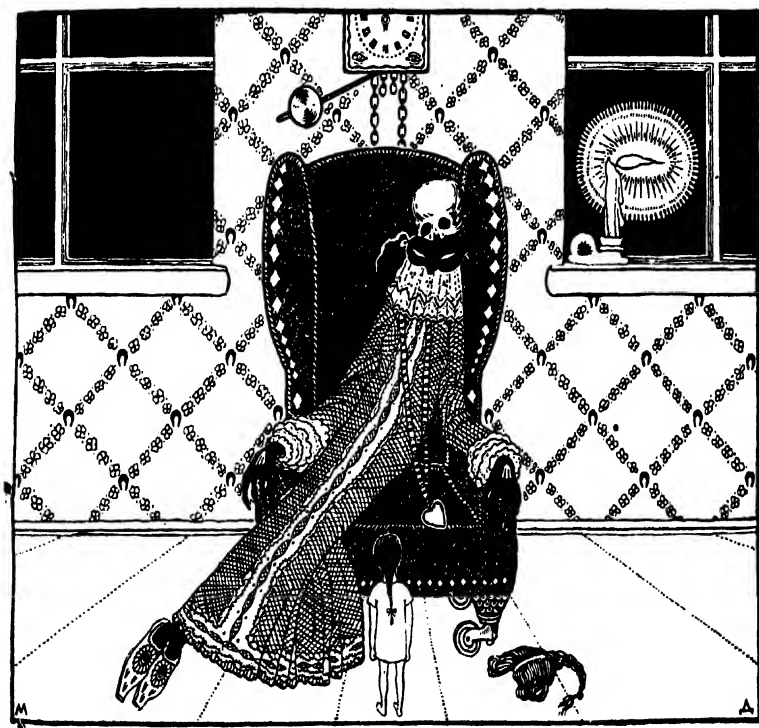
I have already given my reasons for seeing little hope of such a solution. Obedience is the easiest form of sloth, and as soon as you put a man into uniform you render obedience almost irresistible. Further, a soldier demands pay, clothes, food, and hitherto there has existed no definite power in Russia, except the Crown, to which he could look for these necessities.

But it was no wonder the Government regarded the Bund as their most dangerous enemy in a hostile nation. Under the unpopular bywords of "Anarchist" and "Jew," the members of the Bund were seized and executed without mercy or regret. Upon the river bank, half a mile north of the city, stands the great fortress called the Citadel. I happened to see more of it than most travellers, for, by good luck, I managed one afternoon to penetrate far within the gates before I was arrested. But still I could not identify Pavilion 10, where some six hundred political prisoners were then crowded together, nor the places of execution, where so-called Anarchist Jews were shot. The official number of the executed

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in the month then stood at only sixteen, but it was impossible to estimate the true figures, when the only form of trial was a secret court-martial, and when fishermen on the Vistula reported, as they did while I was there, that they had seen bodies appearing through holes in the ice below the Citadel, with faces mutilated to prevent recognition.

As in the rest of Russia, all the prisons were so overcrowded that the prisoners were dying of filth and disease. The town prison in Warsaw had four hundred politicals, and sixty of them were crammed into a room built for twenty-five. But if only as a relief from the dreariness of futile party distinctions, let me end with the official statement concerning two Jewesses, arrested as the accomplices of a man named Gramen, who had been shot for manufacturing bombs. Governor-General Skallon gave it out that it went against his feelings of humanity to shoot women, and accordingly he offered to appeal to the Tsar himself on behalf of these two, if they would only promise never to take part in the revolution again. They both replied that if they were ever released, they would fling themselves into the movement with more enthusiasm than ever. So both were shot. And that one solid instance of invincible heroism proves that even Poland, in spite of all her divisions and abstractions and intrigues, is not beyond the hope of liberty, since even in the wilderness of her parties that kind of courage is seen to blossom.



1905
1906

From *Jupel (Sulphur)*.

CHAPTER XVII

THE DRAMA OF FREEDOM

WHEN for a time I left Russia in February, the powers of reaction were at their highest, and at such a moment it might well seem absurd to speak of the dawn, for the ancient darkness of Russia appeared again to have closed in upon the land. In looking back upon the things I had witnessed, they naturally presented themselves to me as the scenes of a great drama, in which the old Titans and demigods of humanity played from behind strange masks, compelled by the rival immortals of Freedom and Oppression, whose voices could at times be heard and their forms almost seen, while the journalists of Europe chimed in with a chorus of alternately sympathetic comment. But there was no doubt that, as in all great dramas, the Protagonist had become involved in the toils of evil, and that, as far as worldly success went, a tragic fate was overwhelming him.

When first I arrived in the country, the air was still radiant with hope. It is true that the early flush had a little faded ; the joyful intoxication of the October Manifesto was passing off, and people

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were beginning to realize that freedom is not a thing to depend on any man's words. Liberty and despotism were hanging in the balance, and the dull weights of habit and force were pressing down their scale. But exiles were returning, prisoners were released, the Press was free. Great public halls sounded to unaccustomed words of liberty, and the Strike Committee, which had shaken the strongest tyranny of the world, was still the strongest power in the country. The Government stood uncertain and afraid. It felt itself confronted by an unknown and incalculable adversary, the more terrible for its vagueness—an adversary that out of unregarded obscurity had struck one sudden and paralyzing blow and now lay coiled up in its lurking place, only waiting for the fit moment to strike that blow again.

In its distress the Government looked round for help. It looked to the railways to carry its troops, and the trains ceased running. It looked to the post and telegraph to bear its orders, and the wires were cut, and the letters lay in heaps. It looked to the army, and from all sides came the tale of mutiny; to the navy, and it heard the flames of Odessa, the flames of Kronstadt, and the big guns of Sevastopol. It looked to the Press, and it found even the ancient supporters of Tsardom were beginning to hint at reforms. The very Ministers were understood to speak a little uncertainly of autocracy,

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and whenever a reporter was within hearing, the chief of them all kept muttering, "I am a bit of a Liberal myself." So the Government stood uncertain, in the uneasy position of an animal which does not know whether it is to be hound or hare upon the course.

That we may call the first act of the drama, but when the second act opened, the powers of evil were seen more actively insinuating themselves into the course of tragedy. Their activity took the form of a plot which can be easily unravelled from the course of the events upon the stage. In order to involve the Russian people in the doom of tragedy, they may be represented as thus whispering to the leaders of the Government :—

"The first thing is to secure the Army, by promises of better food and pay. Having secured the Army, you may goad the people to open resistance by attacking them without warning. When they rise it will be easy to stamp them down, and under the excuse of their violent revolution, you can silence the Press, you can close the meetings, you can shoot or imprison the leaders, you can choke the voice of freedom in troublesome districts like Finland, the Baltic Provinces, Poland, and the Caucasus. By controlling the elections you can secure exactly the kind of Duma you want. You may then appeal to Europe to admire both your power and your progress, and all Europe will join

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in applause. The chorus of journalists which used to sing 'The Dawn of Freedom,' will chant warnings to rebellion and the triumph of order over chaos. Your object will then be gained, for you can obtain the money that is the one thing needful for your existence. England will again recognize your credit. France will contribute the interest on her own loans, and Germany will recognize a Government endued with just about as much liberty as her William likes."

Such were the suggestions of the powers of evil, and the Russian Government is not to be blamed for accepting them gladly. That unhappy little group of royalties, Grand Dukes, landlords, officials, and priests, were fighting, not merely for an obsolete ideal of State, but for their very existence, for their daily pleasures, their daily bread, for a decent roof over their heads and a decent table over their legs. It was no child's play for them, since all they valued was at stake, and the only wonder is that they were clever enough to understand the whispered promptings of the powers who spoke on behalf of Oppression, an ancient and venerable god. If any Russian statesman or general or admiral had displayed the strategic skill in dealing with the Japanese that the Government now revealed in suppressing the liberties of their own country, Russia would have been spared one of the most shameful and overwhelming disasters in history.

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But in following these promptings, the Government succeeded at every point. The general strike was the only genuine weapon the people had—an irresistible weapon, provided it was used simultaneously and seldom. The Government drove the leaders to use it piecemeal and often. They confiscated the strike funds to starve the women and children, they employed hunger and Cossacks to shake the determination of the men. By bombarding a committee, they drove the revolutionists to build the Moscow barricades before the movement was ripe and while the other cities remained inactive. They discovered the fighting weakness of freedom, and the entire security with which men in uniform can be trusted to kill at the command of those who feed and pay them. They stamped down the rising in blood. They shot all the leading revolutionists, they imprisoned all the suspects, they hewed the insignificant in pieces. They applauded the murderers of doctors who were saving the wounded. They executed schoolboys for believing better forms of government possible, and they handed over schoolgirls to soldiers to be flogged.

In all this they proved themselves entirely wise, for they gained their end. The moment that the Moscow rising was crushed, troops were let loose with confidence upon Poland, the Caucasus, and the Baltic Provinces. Preparations were made for the reconquest of Finland. Executions became general

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throughout the Empire. The prisons were crammed, and typhus finished what the rifle and hang-rope left undone. The elections for the Duma were prepared under police supervision, and Liberal candidates removed to prison. Liberal meetings were forbidden, Liberal papers suppressed. The chorus of European journalists chanted the overthrow of rebellion and the restoration of order. And at last, as the crowning reward of a faithlessness and cruelty so cleverly displayed, the deficit of over £80,000,000 was freely supplied by a fresh European loan, to which the so-called Liberal Powers of France and England were the chief contributors. There is something divine in success so unquestioned and unassailable, nor can we wonder that its worship is almost universal. In the autumn of 1905, no one thought it possible for the Russian Government to raise another loan for its existence, unless under guarantees of liberty and popular control. But the Government quietly set about the work of slaughter, and when that was finished held out a bloody hand to Europe; and Europe kissed the bloody hand reverently, and filled it with gold. In the spring of 1906, a loan of £90,000,000 was subscribed without question, and upon a triumphant tableau of Oppression reinstated and Evil enriched the curtain fell. In the distance the spirits that attend on Freedom were faintly heard bewailing her defeat.

Under large and shadowy symbols, the powers

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of human history may thus be imagined to move upon their stage, and it is much easier to conceive their great abstractions than to realize the life or sufferings of one man or woman out of the millions of human beings, compared to whom all principles of freedom, government, or justice are but unstable visions of the mind. It is in realizing solid and visible things that the imagination fails. I have seen a few peasants starving on potatoes warmed with straw, while they had sold their corn to Europe before it was reaped, so as to pay for defeated armies, sunken battleships, a bloodthirsty police, and the pleasures of landowners in St. Petersburg. I have seen a few, but the imagination refuses to picture the millions on millions like them, who are actually now existing. I have seen a few tattered soldiers from the war dragging into Moscow at last, begging for farthings, squatting on the curb-stones or murmuring vacantly to themselves, "Alive and home ; alive and home !" I have seen a few, but there were at least five hundred thousand of them still to come—starving, tattered, mutinous, broken with terror and distress. I have seen a few work-people in their homes—scant of food, empty of comfort, and crowded with human beings—but there are millions like them. A few people I knew were shot, many were imprisoned ; but there are thousands whose sons and lovers and friends have been shot, and thousands on thousands who are themselves in

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prison. I have heard and read of girls being flogged ; but there are hundreds of lovers and brothers and fathers who have known the girls that were flogged, and have seen them come back tortured and shamed from the soldiers' hands. The picture of such things indefinitely repeated throughout a vast Empire becomes like the nightmare of a madman, and before such bare realities the imagination falls helpless. If we wished to be charitable, we might say that this is why Frenchmen and Englishmen could still be found to bolster up the bloodthirsty tyranny with a loan, and no shout of laughter arose when Witte still went on murmuring, "I am a bit of a Liberal myself," and the Tsar telegraphed to England that he was meditating a new Peace Conference at the Hague.

So the triumph of reaction appeared to be complete : it seemed assured by the mere immensity of its horror, and the returned exiles admitted that in the worst days of their youth Russia had never suffered as she was suffering now. Yet I suppose that no single revolutionary in the country abandoned hope or contemplated peace. If there is something discouraging in the Russian passive endurance, it has its compensation in a slow but unwavering persistence in rebellion. In spite of all the winter's executions and imprisonment, I doubt if there was one good rebel the less in spring than in autumn, and revolutionists of all types were now drawn together

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by that just and savage indignation which is the strongest bond of union. The bureaucrats of Tsardom had stamped for themselves a red surface on which their little circle might continue to live a while longer ; but the revolution was boiling underneath, and even they could not be deaf to the hum and rumble of its working. In such mood, and amid such hopes and fears, the advent of the long-promised Duma was awaited.

DIARY OF EVENTS

In January, M. Durnovo, as Minister of the Interior, was freed from the supervision of Count Witte, and made responsible only to the Tsar.

Two main subjects were prominent in Russian affairs during the following weeks—finance and the elections for the Duma.

In the middle of January, Shipoff, the Minister of Finance, had issued the official estimates for the Budget of 1906, showing an expenditure of £251,000,000 and a deficit of £48,000,000. The main items of the revenue were—

			£
Direct taxes	...	...	15,000,000
Indirect taxes	...	...	42,000,000
State monopolies	...	...	64,000,000
State lands	...	...	59,000,000

The main items of expenditure were—

			£
Interest on loans	34,000,000
War Office	38,000,000

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				£
Navy	10,000,000
Ministry of Finance	34,000,000
„	„	Interior	...	13,000,000
„	„	Communications	...	48,000,000
„	„	Education	...	4,000,000*

But besides these items of ordinary expenditure there remained—

				£
Extraordinary War disbursements	...	...	...	40,000,000
Famine relief	...	...	...	3,000,000

The true deficit for the year amounted to at least £80,000,000, and would probably be nearer £90,000,000. In spite of the large foreign loans the gold reserve had fallen from £106,000,000 in February, 1904, to £94,000,000 in December, 1905, and the paper in circulation had risen from £59,000,000 to £143,000,000 in the same period.

On February 21st the trial of Lieutenant Schmidt for the mutiny at Sevastopol began in Odessa. On March 3rd he was sentenced to be hanged.

On February 26th, an Imperial Ukase fixed May 10th as the date for the Duma, the total number of members being 476, of which 412 would represent European Russia, exclusive of Poland.

On March 5th, the elections began among the peasants of the St. Petersburg province.

On March 6th, an Imperial Manifesto was published reorganizing the old Council of the Empire, and further limiting the powers of the Duma. The Council of the Empire was now to consist of an equal number of elected and nominated members. The elected members would represent the Zemstvos, the Holy Synod, the Universities, the

* Figures from the *Times* of January 15, 1906.

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Bourse, the nobility, and the landowners of Poland. Both the Council and the Duma would be convoked and prorogued annually, and have equal legislative powers in introducing bills, but every measure must be passed by both the Council and the Duma before it could be laid before the Tsar.

When the Duma was not sitting the Committee of Ministers might conduct legislation not involving any change in the fundamental laws of the Empire.

The *Molva* (formerly the *Russ*) published an account of terrible tortures inflicted on Vincentz Siecska and Edmund Kempski by M. Grun, chief of detectives in Warsaw, to make them confess and sign false documents. This paper had already told how two officers had tortured and outraged the schoolgirl Spiridonova arrested for complicity in the assassination of the Tamboff Vice-Governor. One of the officers was afterwards found shot on the road.

On March 19th, Lieutenant Schmidt was shot.

On March 20th, the Mutual Credit Society's Bank in Moscow was forcibly robbed of £85,000.

At this time several battalions and mountain batteries were sent into Finland as though for the reconquest of the country and the destruction of its restored liberties. They were, however, withdrawn, probably owing to representations made to the Government that an attack upon Finland at such a moment would prove an obstacle to the much-needed loan from France and England.

The victory of the Constitutional Democrats in the Duma elections from March 28th onward, was greeted with satisfaction by nearly all the Progressive parties. At Odessa on April 1st, all the sixty-six candidates selected by the workmen of sixty-six factories were imprisoned, and the authorities directed the workmen to choose reactionaries.

The remains of Lieutenant Schmidt were dug up and

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scattered in the sea because his grave was becoming a place of pilgrimage.

On April 4th, it was found that the Constitutional Democrats had carried every electoral seat in St. Petersburg, even in the official and commercial wards. The *Molva* called upon France not to defy the verdict of the Russian nation by helping the present Administration with money. The paper was again suppressed, but reappeared as *The Twentieth Century*.

M. Kokovtsoff again set out for Berlin and Paris in the hope of negotiating a new loan.

At the elections in Moscow nearly all the 40,000 electors went to the poll, and 70 per cent. voted for the Constitutional Democrats.

About April 10th, Germany refused to share in the proposed new Russian loan, chiefly owing to Russia's service to France during the Algeciras Conference. Germany already holds about £140,000,000 of Russian stock.

France, however, agreed to advance £46,000,000 out of a new five per cent. loan of £90,000,000 at the price of 88. Austria advanced £6,600,000, Holland a little over £2,000,000, and England a little over £13,000,000.

The arrangement was concluded at Easter, April 14th, and nearly sufficed to cover Russia's deficit for the current year. The Russian Minister of Finance proposed to meet the increased charge by further indirect taxation, especially on gas, electricity, and candles.

On April 23rd, a most brilliant rescue of ten "politicals" was effected at Warsaw. Some men in police-officers' uniform called at the Pavia-street prison in the early morning and demanded the prisoners in order to transfer them to the Citadel, which, as I have explained above, stands besides the Vistula a short distance north of the town.

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Later in the day the police van and driver were found in a garden upon the outskirts, the prisoners having escaped together with their comrades who carried out the rescue.

On May 1st, it was definitely announced, not for the first time, that Witte had resigned his position as President of the Committee of Ministers, and an entire change of Cabinet was rumoured.

For about a week before this, rumours of Father Gapon's death, either by assassination or suicide, had become frequent and fairly definite in Russia. His fate was attributed to the double part he had long been accused of playing as an agent of the Government. The St. Petersburg press have published an anonymous pamphlet received from Berlin, in which the treacheries are enumerated for which it was said he has been condemned and executed.

On May 2nd, M. Durnovo, with the approaching Duma in view, sent instructions to the Governors of the Provinces to prevent the peasant delegates from travelling with Constitutional Democrats. News from Poland reported the election of the National party's candidates.

On May 4th, Count Witte, ex-Prime Minister, was thanked and decorated, and M. Durnovo resigned the post of Minister of the Interior for that of Secretary of State, retaining the dignity of Senator and member of the Council of Empire. M. Goremykin, an expert in agrarian and peasant questions, was appointed Premier, and the opening of the Duma was announced for May 10th. The Congress of Constitutional Democrats assembled in St. Petersburg, have published the programme of their party.

On May 6th, Admiral Dubasoff, Governor-General of Moscow was wounded by a bomb when returning from the Uspenski Cathedral. The attempt took place outside the carriage entrance to the Government House in Moscow. The bomb-thrower is supposed to have been killed by the

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explosion. Partial strikes in Poland, Kieff, Moscow, and St. Petersburg were reported, and agrarian disorders said to continue.

General Jeoltanowski, Governor of Ekaterinoslav, was assassinated by six unknown men, who fired their revolvers at him and then escaped. The station of Schlok at the Tukkum Junction was attacked by fifteen armed men, who killed five officials and ransacked the safes of post-office and station.

On May 7th, the Tsar issued a Ukase affecting the Fundamental Laws, and a meeting of the Imperial Economic Society of St. Petersburg was dispersed by police.

May 8th, the New Fundamental Laws, the last work of the Witte-Durnovo Cabinet and the old State Council, were published. These laws, which the Duma cannot alter, proclaim the unity of the Empire and the language, including Finland in the Empire under special institutions, but making no mention of Poland. The powers of the Tsar as Autocrat were to include the sole right of proposing changes in the Fundamental Laws to the State Council and the Duma; also the right of veto, the appointment of the Executive, the ministers and the judges, the decision of peace and war, and the command of the army and navy. Freedom of speech, meeting or union, together with inviolability of person and house were granted, but only "under established legal conditions." Ordinary laws could not be passed without the consent of the Tsar and both Houses, but the Tsar might promulgate special laws and declare various parts of the Empire to lie under martial law. The Council of Ministers, too, might promulgate special temporary laws, with the Tsar's consent. The State Council and the Duma were to meet annually, but could be dismissed at any time by the Tsar. Their powers were

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not to extend over the public debt or over the expenses of the Court and Ministry. War taxes might be raised without the consent of the Duma, and so might foreign loans. The decrees of the Tsar were to be countersigned by one of the ministers, but as each minister was declared responsible to the Tsar alone, this concession was meaningless.

It was at once obvious that the elective body being deprived of all control over the expenditure, the Executive and their action, hardly any democratic element was left in the new Constitution, except the right of protest without the power to make the protest effective.

Some of the new ministers were officially announced : M. Stishinsky, for Agriculture ; M. Stcheglovitoff, for Justice ; M. Kaufman, for Education ; and M. Schwanebach as Imperial Comptroller.

A number of repressive measures against workmen have been initiated by the management of various State works in St. Petersburg, and the workmen have laid their grievances before the peasant deputies in St. Petersburg who meet daily at the house of M. Aladin.

Another meeting of the Economical Society to consider the agrarian question, which was attended by many members of the Duma, was dispersed by the police. M. Stolypin was named as Minister of the Interior, and M. Alexander Isvolsky, Minister at the Danish Court, has been recalled to take office as Minister of Foreign Affairs in M. Goremykin's Cabinet. M. Isvolsky is credited with a sound and independent judgment. He was a strong opponent of the war with Japan.

On May 9th, the Congress of the Constitutional Democrats closed with an impassioned speech from Professor Miliukoff, who declared the publication of the decree on the Fundamental Laws to be a direct challenge to the nation. A resolution was unanimously adopted declaring

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the Fundamental Laws to be a flagrant violation of the Manifesto of October 30th.

A Peasant Parliamentary Party formed, numbering 129 members, all in favour of the transfer of lands to the agricultural labourers.

The Tsar and Tsaritsa with their children left Tsarkoe Selo for Peterhof.

The opening of the Duma was declared a public holiday, but all demonstrations except religious services and street decorations were strictly forbidden. The Semenovsky Regiment, so active in the Moscow massacre, were chosen to guard the Palace, and all the hospitals ordered to prepare for eventualities.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE FIRST PARLIAMENT

THE 10th of May had long been announced as the official birthday of Russian freedom, but every one was astonished when the birth actually took place, and the officials were the most astonished of all. Stars and omens were unpropitious. The astrologers muttered of a secret and violent influence, already blighting the future hope before it breathed. At the door was sitting an obscure and gigantic form with hands ready to throttle its earliest cry ; and in the heavens, Orion's sword, with point directed at the house of birth, was seen hanging by a single hair.

It required no divination to prophesy evil. Every art of provocation had been used by the pensioners of violence to arouse a popular outbreak, so that in the name of order the people's hopes might again be thwarted. Martial law was maintained, and meetings were suppressed. Only on the Tuesday night before the fateful Thursday, I visited the hall of the Free Economic Society for old acquaintance' sake, because the Strike Committee

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used to meet there, and sat among a peaceful audience of Constitutional Democrats and peasant members of the Duma, listening to a statistical discourse on the agrarian question. Suddenly a measured tramp was heard outside, thirty armed police forced their way into the crowded hall, and their officer declared the meeting closed. White-haired Annensky, the club's aged President, famous equally for learning and imprisonment, vainly recited the Society's statute of freedom, granted by Catherine II. herself. Speakers and audience, Members of Parliament, men and women alike, were driven out into the street, and in the name of the law we were commanded to learn nothing further about the comparative statistics of agricultural productivity.

The change of Ministry during the previous week was claimed as an advantage by both sides. The removal of Witte and Durnovo simultaneously at least made the assembly of the Duma possible, and the appointment of Goremykin as Premier was greeted even by many Liberals as a harmless and natural thing, just as in England it is harmless and natural to make a lord chairman of an agricultural show. On the other hand, it was seen that the new Ministers as a body belonged to the familiar old gang of bureaucrats, trained in the routine of officialdom, and untouched by the realities of wider life. Finally, the publication of the new version of

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“Fundamental Laws” only three days before the Duma met was clear evidence that the party of reaction still controlled the hesitating Tsar ; for as long as those Fundamental Laws remained above change and above discussion, the power promised to the people—the power that we call freedom—must inevitably continue ineffectual as an infant spirit in limbo.

So the omens of freedom’s birth were dark ; but omens are usually dark in Russia, and when the expected morning came, the church bells set up a famous clanging, and the beautiful city of St. Petersburg woke light-hearted as usual in the midst of her perils. For the security of the despotism every precaution had been taken. The palace arrangements had been made by Trepoff himself, whose influence in the Imperial household remained unabated. The deep and brilliant river ran silent and empty of traffic, while up its course the Tsar was spirited back to the city which had not known him since Bloody Sunday. All the approaches to the Winter Palace were barred from dawn. The two nearest bridges over the Neva were closed. Troops were drawn across the neighbouring streets. Bodies of variegated Cossacks and Guards, their horses bright with scarlet cloths, stood patient for hours upon the vast and stony square before the palace doors. No common eye might gain a glimpse of the glory to be revealed. No cabman brought a duke

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without displaying a special green ticket in his hat. For days before; the most elaborate system of coupons and signatures and photographs for identification had been organized with infinite effort to prevent any dreadful occurrence. Yet when the moment came, no one consulted the nice photographs with which I had freely supplied the palace, and I walked in far more easily than its owner. I have often noticed that despotism affords these little advantages over decent government.

As the scene of the day's first ceremony, Trepoff had chosen the large Coronation Hall, constructed with columns of genuine marble—so few things are genuine in these palaces—and decorated with gold and crimson hideousness, to which all Emperors are obliged to grow accustomed. At the end of the hall, upon a few low steps, stood a rather old gilded throne. Over it was thrown a robe of ermine and yellow stuff in studied negligence, and round it stood four little gilded camp-stools. A praying-desk and a table, both covered with gold cloth, were placed in the middle of the inlaid floor, and some priests or deacons carried in the miraculous Icon, representing the head of Christ, from the little old palace of Peter the Great. But when they had set it on the praying-desk they found it was so dusty, or had been so much kissed of late, that they had to spend the leisure time in polishing it up with a fairly clean handkerchief. Beside them was

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presently drawn up a choir of men and boys, all dressed in long cassocks of crimson and gold to match the furniture.

Meantime the new State Council (or Council of Empire) had begun to arrive and gather on the low platform constructed down the side of the hall to the right of the throne. Senators also came in brilliant scarlet and gold, past and present Ministers with long beds of gold-lace flowers and foliage down their coats, a whole school of admirals (if one may borrow a marine phrase from the porpoise), a radiant company of Field Marshals and generals in blue or white cloth with gold or silver facings and enormous epaulettes, and the members of the Holy Synod in the panoply of holiness. Soon the entire platform was full of uniforms, and on the breast of each uniform gleamed stars and crosses and medals, a few of which were gained by service in foreign or civil war. Sometimes one could only hope that the hero would live to win no more distinction, since there was no more room for orders, so great had been the wisdom or courage of the heart that beat below.

By some mistake, three peasant deputies, in high top-boots, with leather belts round their long Sunday coats, entered among all this brilliance, contemplated it as though working out its value in grain, and then were hurriedly conducted away by a being with a queer gold crook. But they were only a few

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minutes wrong in the programme, for directly afterwards all the Duma members came trooping in—sturdy peasants in homespun cloth, one Little Russian in brilliant purple with broad blue breeches, one Lithuanian Catholic bishop in violet robes, three Tartar Mullahs with turbans and long grey cassocks, a Balkan peasant in white embroidered coat, four Orthodox monks with shaggy hair, a few ordinary gentlemen in evening dress, and the vast body of the elected in the clothes of every day.

All down the left side of the hall they ranged themselves, about four hundred and sixty of them altogether ; for, at the last moment, all had consented to come, though many of the peasants and Constitutional Democrats had threatened to stay away, in protest against the Fundamental Laws. There they stood, confronting the brilliant crowd across the polished floor, and it was easy to see in them the symbol of the new age which now confronts the old and is about to devour it. Shining with decorations and elaborately dressed in many colours, on the one side werè the classes who so long have drained the life of the great nation they have brought to the edge of ruin. Pale, bald, and fat, they stood there like a hideous masquerade of senile children, hardly able to realize the possibility of change. But opposite to them thronged the people—young, thin, alert, and sunburnt, with brown and hairy heads, dressed like common mankind, and straining for the future chance.

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In that sharp contrast between obsolete failure and coming hope lay the only significance of that palatial scene, unless a dim significance still lurked in the dozen Byzantine bishops and metropolitans, who, in stiff gold and domed mitres, tottered up the space between the confronting ages, and embraced each other's hoary beards with holy kisses. They had hardly been brought into line before the altar when a sudden hush was felt by all, and far away was heard the melancholy and beautiful Russian Hymn. It heralded the approach of the regalia, and presently there entered the golden sceptre and the golden orb, the seal of bronze, and the diamond crown, each reposing upon a velvet cushion and escorted by golden staves and the flag of Empire and the big gilt sword. Then at last I discovered the purpose of those four gilded camp-stools round the throne. I had hoped to see one of the Tsar's four little daughters seated on each, but they served only as resting-places for the majestic toys of kings.

Close behind his toys, the little Tsar himself was seen advancing. There was a timid swagger in his gait, but he walked alone, and his uniform looked simple after the finery we had seen. The aged metropolitan of St. Petersburg stood in wait for him with the holy kiss and a bunch of green herbs dipped in consecrated water. Behind the Tsar came his mother and his wife, who were refused the sprinkling, but gained the other blessing. Twelve feet

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behind them their trains extended flat along the floor, and, as in a fairy tale, armed men stood ready to help with the weight of each. At a safe distance behind the trains were halted the Grand Dukes in two or three rows of repeated splendour.

With voices of thunder and voices from the tomb, the priests chanted, and called, and read the golden book as only Russian priests are able, and the rows of crimson choir sang the wailing responses between. Upon the right the flashing crowd was busy bowing and signing the cross. Rarely is such religious zeal to be witnessed as the Grand Dukes displayed in crossing themselves; for in this evidence of sanctity they surpassed the very bishops. But the stiff-necked generation on the left remained unmoved. One or two peasants crossed themselves as they were accustomed; a few more complied when the priest shook the solid cross threateningly in their direction; but the black phalanx stood unmoved—polite but detached spectators of these curious survivals.

The service ceased, the bishops stood aside, the altar was carried away, the Empresses swept to their corner among the white-shouldered ladies on the right of the throne. In the open space the little Tsar stood solitary. Gathering together all the initiative in his nature, he walked slowly up the floor, mounted the steps, faced round to the assembly, and sat down upon the negligent ermine

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robe. A brilliant official handed him a large parchment, and he stood up to read. Amid the intent silence of contrary hopes and expectations, his voice sounded clear. All knew that a turning-point in history had come, and that to this little man one of the world's great opportunities had been offered.

But with every sentence that was pronounced, the hopes of the new age faded. As commonplace succeeded commonplace, amid the usual appeals to Heaven and the expression of such affection as monarchs always feel for their subjects, it was seen that no concession was made, no conciliation attempted. The one paragraph in which something comparatively definite was said about the Imperial heart's solicitude for the peasants and the future enlightenment of the people—that paragraph was marked by the dangerous old phrase of “unwavering firmness,” and by fresh insistence upon the necessity of order.* When the end came, and

* The text of the speech was as follows :—

“Divine Providence has laid on me the care of the welfare of the Fatherland, and has moved me to summon representatives elected by the people, to co-operate in the work of framing laws.

“With an ardent belief in a prosperous future for Russia, I welcome in you the best men, to whose election I commanded my beloved subjects to proceed.

“Difficult and complicated labours await you, but I believe that the ardent wishes of the dear native land will inspire you and will unite you.

“I with unwavering firmness will uphold the institutions which I have established, in the firm conviction that you will devote all your powers to the self-sacrificing service of the Fatherland, to a clear

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the colours were waved, and the band played, and the officials shouted, "Hurrah!" while the Imperial procession marched from the hall, the members of the party of progress stood dumb. They knew now that for the future they had only themselves to look to, and that the greatest conflict of all still lay before them. Had the Tsar but granted an amnesty to the thousands on thousands of prisoners still lying in gaol because their political views did not coincide with his own, it would have been difficult to measure the extent of his future influence. But one of the world's opportunities had again been offered him, and not for the first time he had refused it.

Nevertheless, come what will, the 10th of May was really a turning-point in history. On the evening after the battle of Valmy, where the new order of citizen-soldier held its own against the

presentation of the needs of the peasants, which lie so close to my heart, to the enlightenment of the people, and to the development of its well-being. You must realize that for the great welfare of the State, not only is Liberty necessary, but also order on the basis of law.

"May my ardent wishes be fulfilled! may I see my people happy, and be able to bequeath to my son as his inheritance a firmly-established, well-ordered, and enlightened State!

"May God bless me, in conjunction with the Council of Empire and the Duma, in the work before us, and may this day prove the rejuvenation of Russia's moral outlook and the reincarnation of her best powers.

"Go to the work to which I have summoned you, and justify worthily the trust of your Tsar and your country! God help me and you!"

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mercenaries of kings, Goethe said to his comrades on the field, "To-day a new age begins, and we can say we were present at its birth." Those were the words that rang in my mind as I watched the uniforms and decorations disappear in their carriages, and then followed the new deputies, and saw the prisoners waving their handkerchiefs in greeting from the barred windows of the Cross prison over the river, and stood among the crowd at the new Duma's door, and listened to the deep-mouthed cheers, while the whole air sounded with the cries of "Amnesty!" and "Freedom!"

St. Petersburg is particularly rich in the dignified classic architecture of the eighteenth century, but of all the examples of this style none is so beautiful as the interior of the Taurida Palace, which Catherine II. built as a present for her lover Potemkin. With little change it has now been converted into the simplest and noblest of all Houses of Parliament, and it was there that the first meeting of Russia's chosen representatives was opened at four o'clock that afternoon. The first business was the election of a Speaker or President. Every one knew that Muromtzeff, a Constitutional Democrat, and one of the members for Moscow, would be elected. In his youth he had been Professor of Law in Moscow University, but had been driven from his Chair by a Government which trembles at excellence in any form. Since then he had won a high reputation at

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the bar, and was known as the greatest authority on Parliamentary procedure. His character, his dignified bearing, and his long service to liberty all contributed to make his election certain, but when it was found that he had been chosen by 426 votes to 3, this evidence of the Duma's spirit rather startled the politicians who believe in the blessings of a solid Opposition.

His few and dignified words in thanking the members for raising him to this high position in a State that at last had become constitutional, formed a fit opening for the new Parliament's work. But it had been arranged beforehand that the first real speech should be delivered by Petrunkevitch—Ivan Petrunkevitch, one of the members for Tver, an aged and distinguished Zemstvoist, and leader among such Radical reformers as are not Socialists—one of those who at the beginning of the Tsar's reign urged him in vain to constitutional ways. Inevitably he chose as his subject the demand for amnesty. His speech was utterly irregular. There was no motion or question before the House. He broke every rule of Parliamentary procedure. But that did not matter in the least. One thought filled all hearts—the thought of those thousands of prisoners—seventy-five thousand of them, it was said—still lying in gaol for their love of freedom, and it was of amnesty and amnesty alone that all except a few ungenerous spirits wished first to hear.

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The meeting was then adjourned over the next day, in order that Muromtzeff might report his appointment to the Tsar, who from the Winter Palace had rapidly sought the country retirement where he could feel himself comparatively courageous.

On the afternoon of that Friday, the 11th of May, the State Council, to which had been entrusted equal powers with the Duma, condescended to meet. No crowd watched its members arriving, no prisoners waved them good wishes. An Upper Chamber is raised above the interest of the masses and the gaol-birds of freedom. Its members were quite aware that it was their part in the new constitution only to fulfil the two functions required of such bodies as the British House of Lords—to oppose a permanent barrier to progress, and to provide a cheap reward for obsolete insignificance. As there was yet no progress to bar, and few but themselves were obsolete, they had no call to hurry.

So in the heat of the summer afternoon, having taken a day to recover from the strain of the previous ceremony, they began to gather leisurely in their new hall. In theory they were the same old "Council of Empire" which for many years had served as a field for the display of decorations. And certainly the decorations had not lost their lustre. It was the same uniformed throng as had gathered in the Winter Palace, and they had assumed the same glitter. Conspicuous even

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among their glories was one ancient courtier, who had maintained the Empire under Nicholas I. before the Crimean War, and still went smiling round his orbit, brave with the sixty-five medals of his years of service, while Orders stood clustered on his breast thick as stars upon the Milky Way ; for, unhappily, he had not followed the example of others, and made room for his honours by increasing his girth.

But even the oldest members of the Council must have been dimly aware of changing times, for instead of the familiar old Marie Palace on the square opposite St. Isaac's cathedral, where so many happy afternoons of important idleness had been spent, they now found themselves in the "Noblemen's Assembly" or Club, quite a dignified and classic place, but not the house they were accustomed to. And actually mixed up among them stood a lot of elected and unknown gentlemen, representing the Church, the Universities, Commerce and Industry, the big towns, and other dubious institutions that hang upon the borderland of vulgarity. What was worse, all the six representatives of the Universities openly professed the Constitutional Democratic faith, and five or six more were known to lean towards that terrible party which dominated the Lower House. The only consolation was that just half the Council were still nominated by the Tsar himself, and that of the rest some eighty per cent. could

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be trusted to agree with any Tsar's nominees. It was a relief also to discover that the very few who possessed no uniforms had shown the decency of putting on evening dress when they got up that morning.

By two o'clock a good many members had assembled. Goremykin, the new Premier, was there, languid and neutral in the ministerial stalls. Alexeieff of Manchuria came, and Ignatieff, the Tsar's fat friend, and no one thought it strange when the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg bestowed three kisses of holy peace upon Golitzin, the slaughterer of the Caucasus. Trepoff, who rules the Imperial circle, and parched old Pobiedonostzeff, so long Russia's guide to God, were reported present. Durnovo, late ill-omened Minister of Interior, was there, and at his side Witte, his uncertain enemy, had come to hear his own belated appointment as member of the Council read out, and to meditate the tearful appeal for amnesty by which three days later he was to reveal to his brothers the workmen a heart melting in pity over the woes he had himself inflicted.

So they gathered and chatted and sat down, and then, having nothing else to do, they prayed. For forty minutes the golden priests prayed and sang at golden tables placed before the portrait of the Tsar. Then Count Solsky, whom the Tsar had chosen as President, took his seat, a few messages were read,

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it was agreed to return a gracious answer to the speech from the throne, and Count Solsky, who is much like the late Lord Salisbury in appearance, did what Lord Salisbury himself would have done under the circumstances : he yawned, muttered something inaudible, and adjourned the assembly by turning his back upon it.

The action of the Council throughout would well have become any Second Chamber in the world, but in the Duma things did not go so leisurely, nor were the members so content with the result. On Saturday, May 12th, at eleven, the first true meeting of a popular assembly in Russia began. For nearly twelve hours on end that sitting continued, and yet the immense labour of Russian reform seemed to have advanced no step. Members chafed with impatience. Why not make a beginning since all were agreed, and so much had now to be accomplished ? The same impatience was seen lately even in England, where we have spent six centuries in attempting to perfect the method of self-government. But in Russia the lesson began that day, the evils to be amended were incomparably vaster, and the need of haste was such as England cannot conceive. For over the Duma the sword hung by a hair. The very approach to the Taurida Palace passed through long lines of barracks, and in the left wing of the building itself companies of the Guards had just been stationed, ready for any event.

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And as to waste of time, let us remember the difficulties that beset the infant Parliament. The chamber itself was a large amphitheatre of seats gently rising on steps, each seat fitted with a desk. In a long gallery at the back of the amphitheatre, ambassadors, strangers, and ladies were allowed to be present, and the Russian ladies are so far advanced in civilization that no metal bars were thought necessary to restrain their savage tendencies. Opposite, in the middle of the semicircle's diameter, rose the President's high box, and just below it was the Tribune, from which all members were obliged to speak, except for very short questions or explanations. The President grasped a large bell, but managed to control the assembly without a wig or robes. Behind his chair was a large open space, furnished with tables, where the balloting and counting took place. On each side of the chamber was a large, empty lobby, and behind it a vast hall with polished floor ran from end to end of the building, for the meetings of groups and the discovery of wisdom by members as they walked. Beyond the hall were dining-rooms, tea-rooms, telegraph rooms, telephones, committee-rooms, receptacles for goloshes, and all else that the nature of a member of parliament requires.

To return to the Chamber, on the right and left of the President's box, and facing the assembly, were a number of raised seats for any Ministers who

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might choose to attend. The Ministers had no connection with the assembly; they might not vote; they were responsible only to the Tsar, who appointed them. Among the members there were no Ministers, there was no "Government," there was no one to arrange the order of business or the introduction of measures. Any member got up and proposed what he pleased. In the subsequent discussion on the Address, for instance, from eleven in the morning till seven at night, members rose in succession and made stupendous proposals of reform that were neither discussed nor rejected. At first the parties did not even divide themselves into Right and Left, but members took their seats anyhow, and when in a few days the inevitable division began to show itself, the Right was so scanty as to be hardly visible. Though the true Right numbered about seventy, they were ashamed to be seen on the right, and all members edged as far left as possible. Votes were taken sometimes by members standing up, sometimes by division into lobbies, but the ultimate appeal was to secret ballot, so that it was impossible to calculate a party's votes or to control the relation of a member to his constituents' desire. During the speeches, applause was rare, but at the end members vigorously clapped their hands if they were pleased. They spoke of each other by bare surnames, and would probably use Christian names in Russian fashion as they became

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more intimate. They addressed the assembly as "Gentlemen," and even as "Comrades." The President freely interrupted speakers, argued with them, and gave them little lectures on the procedure and Constitutional Law of other countries. On the first day several members wanted to speak two or three times upon the same question, and explanations of previous speeches were as long as the originals.

There were many difficulties and many differences from our own ancient habits, around which the interesting rags and tatters of the past still flutter. But in starting fresh, the Russian Parliament had at least as much advantage as difficulty, and it will rapidly develop improvements for which we ourselves shall long have to fight against the ghostly influence of our forefathers. One of the first acts of the Duma was to appoint a committee of nineteen to draw up a new scheme of procedure, and they had many lessons to suggest to older Parliaments. But all these discussions on methods and the inevitable mistakes of beginners meant waste of time, and waste of time was more irritating to the Duma members than to our own, because, being peasants and workmen, the majority of them were more serious, their hopes were younger, and, having no Ministers, they had no one to abuse.

As to the course of business itself, almost the

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whole of the first full day was occupied in nominating candidates as Vice-Presidents and four secretaries. The names of the members proposed had to be collected in boxes and arranged in lists. Then followed a slow march round and round the President's box for the ballot. That slow march lasted for hours. Next day (Sunday) it was renewed for the election of thirty-three members to draw up an Address in answer to the Tsar's speech. When that was over the committee of nineteen had to be elected for procedure. Monday there was no meeting because the Address was being prepared. Tuesday they began to talk about the Address. Wednesday they continued talking about the Address, and the wrongs of Russia were at least mentioned. On Thursday the Address was discussed clause by clause, and a week of the Duma had gone.*

To most of the Constitutional Democrats who held the majority inside the Duma, to highly educated men like Professor Muromtzeff, the President, or Professor Miliukoff, who directed

* The following were the chief points suggested by the Committee for the answer to the Tsar's speech. They defined the programme of the majority:—The responsibility of Ministers to the majority in the Duma; universal suffrage (women's suffrage was afterwards added); the abolition of the State Council; the necessity of land reform and universal education; the equality of rights for all classes before the law; freedom of conscience, person, domicile, speech, press, and meeting; control of the budget and redistribution of taxation; local self-government for separate nationalities; amnesty and the abolition of capital punishment.

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the party from the outside, because the Government did not allow his election—to men like these it was probably evident that all this talk on procedure and discussion of principles were essential to popular government, and that delay was part of every great beginning. But the Duma was democratic beyond anything that our House of Commons has yet imagined. Certainly it contained only about fifteen workmen from the towns, because the election of others was annulled by the violence of authority. But it contained about 170 of the peasant class, a few of whom had educated themselves highly and quitted their villages; but some could not read, and nearly all were fine, heavy-browed countrymen, with big shoulders and great brown hands. They had left their dear strips of earth, their dear horses and ploughs, and had come to the smelling city for the one and only purpose of winning the land back for the people who work it. What did it profit them to walk on polished floors with top-boots clean and long coats neatly brushed; to listen to discourses on constitutional procedure; to talk in tea-rooms with men who do not know sand from clay; to tramp for hours dropping marbles into green boxes; and to receive invitations to banquets which they most honourably refused?

They yearned for the old horse at home, and for the fragrant earth where the corn was sprouting

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now. They were on a holy mission ; they would not go back. " We dare not go back without the land," they said ; " our villagers would kill us." In some cases, aged peasants of pious gravity had been sent up at the expense of the village as overseers to watch that the members did their duty, and to complain straight to the Tsar if the land was not restored to its cultivators at once. Forty-three of the peasant members were supposed to belong to the Right and were roughly classed as the " Black Hundred," though in these early days of the Duma they voted steadily with the rest. But if the Labour Party, as the majority of the peasants and the workmen combined began then to be called, felt a little puzzled and impatient at the number of things that had to be done before anything could be done, it was no wonder. We can also understand the difficulties of a Professor of Constitutional Law brought face to face with such a situation.

Behind these passing apprehensions and disappointments lay the one great question which occupied the thoughts of all during the Duma's first regular day of meeting. The sitting opened with messages of congratulation from Russian towns, from the Finland Diet, and from many foreign countries, even down to Bohemia and Montenegro. From England, from the Labour Party at all events, a message had been expected, but none came. Last of all, four telegrams were read from groups of

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“politicals” still in gaol, and amid shouts of “Amnesty!” the whole Duma rose and remained standing till the reading was finished. The world-without-end hours of balloting and discussion of procedure next intervened, and it was not till late in the evening that the burning question was reached at last. Roditcheff, another of the members for Tver, had won the right to introduce it by his long service to the growth of constitutional liberty; for, like his colleague Petrunkevitch, he had been among those whose petition for some degree of popular representation in the government had been rejected by the Tsar twelve years before as an “idle dream.” A peasant leader, Anikin, member for Saratoff, followed him with an even stronger and more eloquent claim for justice towards those who still suffered in the cause of such freedom as Russia now appeared to have won. Other speeches were made, each becoming shorter and stronger as the excitement rose. At last the speeches ended. The question that the demand for amnesty be included in the address to the Tsar was put, and like one man, with one great shout, the whole assembly of Russia’s first representatives rose in answer.

With that scene, this simple record of the things I have lately witnessed may close. I have been told by men of high judgment and authority that the title chosen for the book is too hopeful, that the hour of dawn is still far off in Russia. In moments

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of despair during last winter I should have agreed ; the forces of ancient oppression still appeared irresistibly strong. But writing as I do within the Duma itself, face to face with the grave and determined representatives of the Russian people, I cannot but hope that something has been gained which no violence in the world can compel them ever to surrender. I know the power of tradition, and I know well the power of the sword. But perhaps it may still be proved that more powerful even than tradition and the sword is the passion for freedom and justice which lives in the soul of many

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